

**SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
AS PATHWAYS TO SUPPORT VIETNAMESE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S
EARLY LEARNING IN SASKATCHEWAN: A CASE STUDY WITHIN THE
SASKATOON VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY**

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Graduate Studies and Research
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In the Department of Educational Administration
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By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations and practices related to school, family, and community partnerships that support their children's early learning and development in a Canadian context. The study was guided by three research questions: In what ways do Vietnamese immigrant parents conceptualize school, family, and community partnerships related to their children's early learning and development? What supports and challenges do Vietnamese immigrant parents have in building and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships that facilitate their children's early learning and development? What practices related to the partnerships do Vietnamese immigrant parents employ to assist their children's early learning and development?

Joyce Epstein's (1997) Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence and her Six Types of Involvement Framework were employed in this study. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews and observations to answer three research questions. Participants of the study included three sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents, three teachers, two Vietnamese immigrant children's grandmothers, and one friend of a Vietnamese immigrant family who was selected on the basis of relational proximity with the focal child.

The findings of this study confirmed those of previous studies that immigrant parents share interests in and responsibilities for their children's early learning and that the partnerships are significantly beneficial for immigrant children's early learning and their transition to a new environment out of their home setting. In addition, the findings contributed to previous theories in the field of school, family, and community partnerships. Specifically, guidelines for parental involvement that better represent the involvement of immigrant parents were suggested to extend Epstein's (1997) framework. Additionally, this study shed light on some misaligned perceptions

and interpretations related to language barriers, time constraints, the significance of grandparents' involvement, the principle of equity and respect for diversity, and the expectation for immigrant children's academic early learning.

In addition to implications for theory, the researcher also attempted to provide some implications for practices and future research. Noticeably, some practices related to "Parenting", a dimension of the partnerships significantly acknowledged by the Vietnamese immigrant parents, were presented in detail.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This first chapter sets forth the background and purposes of the study and then introduces the reader to the problem statement and research questions which guided the study. The chapter also presents the significance of the study and provides the reader with definitions, delimitations, and limitations related to the research design.

Background to the Study

School, family, and community partnerships have recently received much attention from educators, researchers, and policy-makers since decades of studies asserted the importance of family involvement in students' academic and personal success (Barnard, 2004; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Peters, Seeds, Goldstein, & Coleman, 2007; Powell, Son, File, & Juan, 2010). Traditionally, the idea of school-family partnerships has been referred to as parental involvement (Berger, 1991). The term "parental involvement" consequently has been widely used by researchers all over the world (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Barnard, 2004; Fan & Chen, 2001; Georgiou, 1996; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Jeynes, 2003; 2007; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009).

In recent times, some researchers, particularly in the United Kingdom, tended to use the term "parental engagement" (Campbell, 2011; Goodall & Montgomery, 2013; Harris & Goodall, 2008) to emphasize parents' proactive participation in children's learning. Meanwhile other researchers in the United States suggested the term "school-family partnership", "home-school partnership", and "school, family, and community partnerships" to formalize the relationship between school and family, and at the same time, to confirm the significant role of communities

for children's learning and development (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Molina, 2013; Pang, 2004; Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2011).

Despite the different terms used, a body of literature related to the relationship between parents and learning contexts has been growing at a rapid rate. Pushor (2007) stated that "topics in the field range from knowledge development to standards to tools to special initiatives, and cover parent involvement/ engagement from preschool to secondary schooling" (p. 4). A variety of literature reviews and meta-analyses of research findings, research implications, and evaluations of specific initiatives appears, authored by various researchers (Campbell, 2011; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005; Jeynes, 2003, 2005, 2007; Peters et al., 2007).

From the growing body of literature has emerged a strong conclusion that school, family, and community partnerships generally benefit children's learning and development. Benefits of the partnerships were reported as not only for the cognitive but also physical, social and emotional development of the child (Gonzalez, 2002; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Hill & Tyson, 2009; El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010; Sheldon, 2003). Likewise, other researchers also clarified benefits for teachers, administrators, and parents (Epstein, 1995; Mapp, 2003; Sanders, 2001; Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2011).

Researchers have also explored the challenges and barriers of parental involvement (Collignon, Men, & Tan, 2001; Dyson, 2001; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Kim, 2009; Morris & Taylor, 1998; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009). Research findings present a number of factors that greatly challenge parental involvement in their children's schooling including time limitations, working pressures, language barriers, and culture barriers (Kim, 2009; Sohn

&Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009). Noticeably, while there is a misperception among teachers and administrators that working parents and single parents were considered as hard-to-reach parents due to their lesser participation in school activities, Crozier and Davies (2005) made a critical point that instead of examining parents' constraints in getting involved in schools, researchers should consider why schools are hard to reach.

While a wealth of international research and literature is available on school, family, and community partnerships, predominantly in American literature, few studies have been conducted in this field in a Canadian context (Pushor, 2007). Findings in a cross-national study of schools and families conducted in 1997 by the OECD's Center for Educational Research and Innovation show that Canada was one of the nations which had recognized the benefits for both teachers and children if parents were available to support the teacher in the classroom, especially during the child's early years (Kelley-Laine, 1998). This recognition is explicit in Canada's initiative of forming a variety of parent councils at school settings, variously named "School Councils" in Ontario and Newfoundland, "Parent Advisory Committees" in British Columbia, "Advisory Councils for School Leadership" in Manitoba, and "School Community Councils" in Saskatchewan (Liskie, 2011; McKenna & Willms, 1998; Preston, 2009).

As a result, most Canadian research in the field places an emphasis on exploring issues regarding parent councils (Levin, 1998; McKenna & Willms, 1998; Parker & Leithwood, 2000; Preston, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012; Stelmach & Preston, 2008). In addition to examining challenges that parent councils face with in order to fulfill their functions in school settings, Canadian researchers have also attempted to examine parents' positioning in relation to the school landscape (Pushor, 2007, 2012; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005); parents' contribution of

knowledge to schools' professional activities (Guo, 2012); and strategies of supporting parental engagement with schools (Hands, 2013).

In short, despite great benefits from the predominantly American literature in the field, more research should be conducted in a Canadian context in order to more comprehensively reflect school, family, and community partnerships developed in the local and provincial jurisdictions of Canada (Pushor, 2007). Jeynes (2005) stated a critical finding that:

Parental involvement enjoys an influence that largely transcends differences in social-economic status, race, and other factors. This is supported in the parental involvement data for racial minorities and by gender, which is encouraging in that any group can experience the advantages of parental involvement. (pp. 259-260)

In a land as diverse as Canada, with a significant population of Aboriginal peoples, a vast representation of cultural groups, and rapidly increasing number of immigrant people, it is significant to engage families in schools to serve as one means of reducing the achievement gap between discrepant student populations (Pushor, 2007). It is also significant to conduct a study in the field of school, family, and community partnerships in a Canadian context in order to best assist parents of all groups, including Aboriginal and immigrant ones.

As an immigrant parent in Saskatoon, I used to struggle with getting involved in my child's education due to my limited understanding of school operation and local social norms. I still remember my daughter's first Valentine's Day in Canada. On that day, my daughter came home with a paper bag filled with Valentine greeting cards, candies and gifts that she had received from her teachers and friends. I felt so guilty for not having known about this custom and for not having prepared for my daughter any Valentine greeting cards and gifts to bring to the classroom. In one interview with Vietnamese immigrant parents, I was told about these

immigrant parents' similar experience on their child's first Valentine's Day in Canada. I also witnessed the struggles of other immigrant parents when their children brought home numerous advertised catalogues of books, crafts, and even forms to order food for the school's fund-raising activities or when their children had to wear different costumes to celebrate Halloween Day at school. I hoped that throughout this study, the voices of immigrant parents would be heeded and the stories of immigrant parents' partnerships with the Canadian school systems would be listened to and more thoroughly understood. I anticipated that the results of this study could promote greater efforts to enhance the equity and better development of immigrant children residing in this country.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in an early learning program. In order to achieve this purpose, the study firstly captured Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations of school, family, and community partnerships that supported their children's early learning and development. Second, the study examined types of involvement, as presented in Epstein's (1997) framework that immigrant parents adopted to support their children's early learning and development in different settings. The study used a qualitative case study design in which I conducted semi-structured interviews and observations.

Statement of the Problem

It is well-supported in the literature that the period between birth to five years of age is marked by intense growth in a child's cognitive functions. This is the age range in which children are most responsive to their physical and intellectual environment and to the behavior of the adults who populate their world (Montessori, 1965; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the first

years of a child's life are indicated as critical opportunities for the development of school, family, and community partnerships in a child's early education (Alnord et al., 2008). However, according to Kargan (1991) there is a popular belief that schools are the only educators of children, and that families simply provide care.

The Saskatchewan government acknowledged that "what happens in the first years of a child's life may be the best predictor of long-term cognitive, physical, psychological and emotional growth" (Government of Saskatchewan, 2004, p. 30). The goals of Saskatchewan early learning and care are stated as follows:

- Children have the best possible learning experiences.
- Families are confident that their children are safe and secure when in the care of others.
- Families have support and assistance from the people and communities around them to raise healthy children.
- Families have practical solutions to barriers.

(Government of Saskatchewan, 2004, pp. 3)

School, family, and community partnerships have been obviously a key component in Saskatchewan early childhood education, particularly in early learning programs. However, the Saskatchewan early learning and care branch has been facing a number of challenges. First, the mechanisms to provide childcare and learning are developed separately. Childcare has been so far the parents' responsibility, with the assistance of a broad range of childcare providers which include both licensed and non-licensed practices. While the licensed childcare centers are under the administration of the Department of Community Resources and Employment, the Department of Learning is responsible for the prekindergarten programs.

Second, access to these early learning programs, especially community school prekindergarten programs without fees, is limited due to the availability and required criteria for enrollment. In addition, the access to nursery programs is affordable only by middle-class families. For instance, although the Saskatchewan provincial allocation in 2012 for regulated child care for children 0-12 years old is ranked in sixth position out of 13 provinces and territories in Canada (\$62,653,151) Saskatchewan suffers from the lowest percentage of children 0-5 years for whom there is a regulated centre-based child care space (11,5%) in comparison with other provinces across Canada. Saskatchewan is also the province whose percentage of children 0-12 years accessing a regulated child care space is the lowest (7.6%) (Ferns & Friendly, 2014, pp. 7-11).

Thus, it is essential to establish both care and learning standards to provide quality care and developmentally appropriate learning programs and activities regardless of settings because it is widely recognized that care and learning cannot be separated. In other words, a blended approach to early learning and care is required. In order to implement the blended approach, it is necessary to connect all the stakeholders including parents, teachers, administrators, and community members who share common interests and responsibilities for children's learning and development.

In fact, the Saskatchewan government also admitted that there were difficulties in building the partnerships among parents, community agencies, and schools in early learning and care sector (Government of Saskatchewan, 2004). Moreover, a significantly increasing number of immigrant families in Saskatchewan in recent years have resulted in tremendous difficulties for the Saskatchewan government. According to the 2011 census, immigration was the greatest contributing factor to a highly increasing population in the province of Saskatchewan. The

Province received more than 28,000 immigrants between 2006 and 2011, compared with approximately 9,500 between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2011). However, immigrant parents are widely recognized as disadvantaged partners due to their language limitations, restricted opportunities for interaction, and psychological and cultural barriers (Ramirez, 2003; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009).

Despite the increasing immigration, there is little known about the partnerships among school, community and immigrant families. Little research has been conducted to investigate how immigrant parents involved themselves in, and receive the support from schools and communities for their children's education, particularly in an early learning program. Thus, it was necessary to explore the partnerships built among teachers, community members, and immigrant parents whose children are introduced to the school setting for the first time. This research contributes to the successful achievement of the provincial goal as well as to a better future for immigrant children.

Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence as Theoretical Framework

In the context of early learning, researchers should consider various aspects of the environment in which a child learns and grows as well as its relationship with the child. In other words, researchers should have a better understanding about the relationship between the child and his or her parents, teachers, and other adults who care for the child. At the same time, characteristics of the families, schools and communities in which the child develops should not be ignored. Understanding these factors enables researchers to examine and support the development of a comprehensive partnership program between and among schools, families, and communities. Therefore, this research was conducted based on the theoretical framework of Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence.

The Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence was developed by Joyce Epstein and her associates in 1987. Epstein (1997) suggested that school, family, and community are three influential contexts in which children learn and grow. Thus these three spheres share overlapping responsibilities in meeting the urgent need to raise and educate children better so that they will meet the challenges in their adulthood.

In the theory, Epstein (1997) discussed both external and internal models that can affect interactions between and among school, family, and community. The external model of overlapping spheres of influence includes important forces that may separate or joint three spheres. These forces may be the background and practices of families, schools, and communities, the developmental characteristics of students, the historical and policy contexts. Thus there are various practices that schools, families, and communities develop separately and some that they conduct jointly in this model in order to influence children's learning and development.

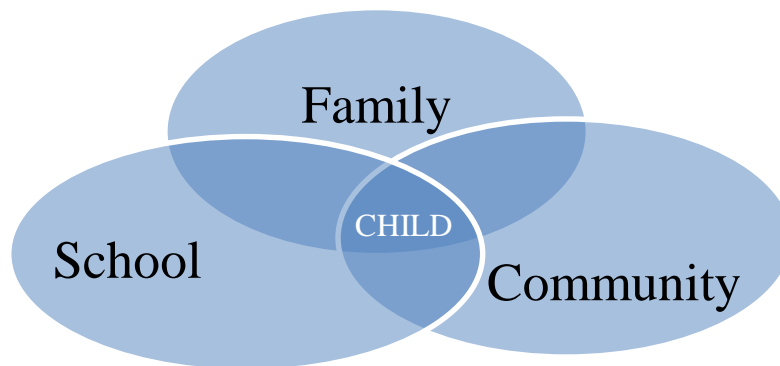


Figure 1.1: Overlapping Spheres of Influence-External Structure. Reprinted from School, family, and community partnership: Your handbook for action (p. 72) by J. L. Epstein, L. Coates, K. C. Salinas, M. G. Sanders, & B. S. Simon. Copyright (1997) by Corwin Press Inc.

At the same time, the internal model explains complicated and vital interactions occurring at institutional level among all the families, children, educators, and entire community and at individual levels among one parent, the child, the teacher, and one community member (Epstein, 1997; Epstein et al., 2009). Figure 1.2 below illustrates intra-institutional and inter-institutional interactions between the school and the family that locates the child at the center because the child is the main actor in his/her education, development, and success in schools (Epstein, 1997). It is noted that in the full model the internal structure is extended to include the community and agent from the community (Epstein, 1997).

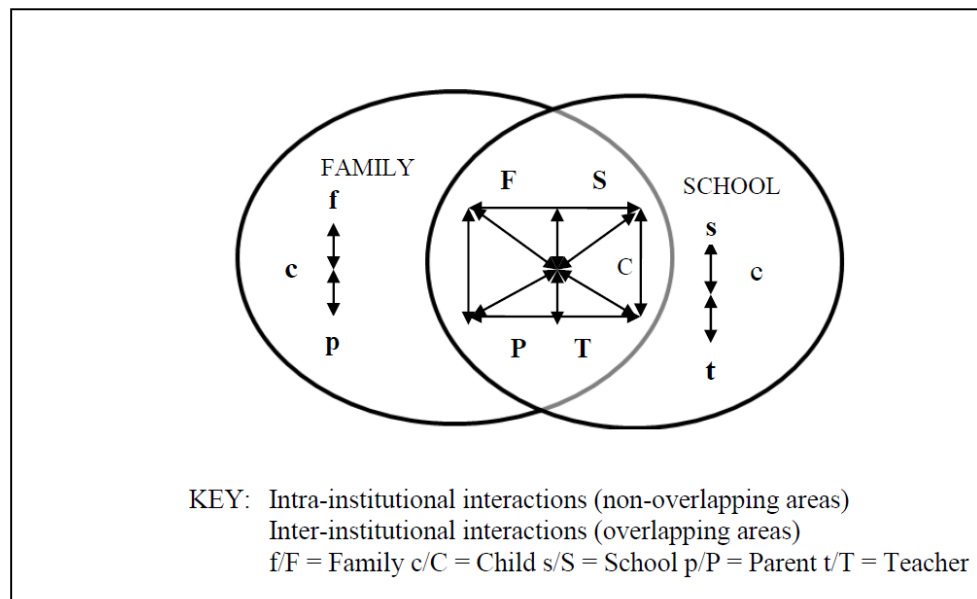


Figure 1.2: Overlapping Spheres of Influence-Internal Structure. Reprinted from School, family, and community partnership: Your handbook for action (p. 73) by J. L. Epstein et al.

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This study also used Epstein (1997)'s Six Types of Involvement Framework. Joyce Epstein and her associates first introduced five types of parental involvement in 1987 and later expanded these into six types. The six types of parental involvement are briefly presented as (a)

parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2001). Under each type of parental involvement, Epstein (1997) enlisted a broad range of involvement roles that parents can and should play in every school. Furthermore, each type has its own anticipated challenges and expected outcomes. Thus this framework allows school administrators to evaluate their current practices and to conduct new partnership programs for and with parents.

Criticism of Epstein's Theory

Although this study relied heavily on the research of Joyce Epstein, there have been some criticisms of her work as it related to the school-family partnerships. Since Epstein (1997) attempted to re-conceptualize parental involvement in order to formalize and equalize the relationship between school and family this reconceptualization has been disputable despite its wide acceptance. Vincent and Tomlinson (1997) viewed the school-family partnerships as a means of maintaining teachers' professional control by considering parent support as an option. Lareau (1996) categorically disapproved of a concept of partnership based on equal-status, because she believed teachers should have greater power than parents. Likewise, other researchers claimed that the model's inattention to power relations between educational stakeholders, which often position parents as passive or complacent, and called for an expansion of the notion of involvement (Auerbach, 2007; Galindo & Medina, 2009).

In addition, since Epstein's (1997) Six Types of Involvement framework provides a variety of practices of partnerships, some researchers argued that this perspective may foster individualistic and school-centric approaches (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). Although these typologies are conceptually useful, they still reflect a restricted vision of partnerships centered on the school's agenda (Banquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).

Researchers also argued that it becomes even more problematic when school goals are largely based on Caucasian and middle-class values and expectations. According to Banquedano-Lopez, Alexander, and Hernandez (2013), these typologies do not engage the intersections of race, class, and immigration, which are relevant to the experiences of many parents from non-dominant backgrounds. Therefore, these types seem to ignore multiple ways non-dominant parents involve in their children's education because they do not correspond to normative perceptions of parental involvement in schools (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). As a result, these ways of framing "restrict the ways in which parents from non-dominant backgrounds can be productive social actors who can shape and influence schools and other social institutions" (Banquedano-Lopez, Alexander, and Hernandez, 2013, p. 149).

Research Questions

The following research questions guiding this study were:

1. In what ways do Vietnamese immigrant parents conceptualize school, family, and community partnerships related to their children's early learning and development?
2. What supports and challenges do Vietnamese immigrant parents have in building and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships that facilitate their children's early learning and development?
3. What practices related to the partnerships do Vietnamese immigrant parents adopt to assist their children's early learning and development?

Significance of the Study

The study investigated various aspects of school, family, and community partnerships in the early learning context to gain understandings of Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations of school, family, and community partnerships in an early learning and their

practices related to the partnerships. Therefore, the information provided by this study extended previous research on school, family, and community partnerships of immigrant families to support their children's learning in early years.

Significantly, this study employed Epstein's (1997) theory as the theoretical framework in which there is a gap, namely the potential ignorance of non-dominant parents' backgrounds and their multiple ways of involvement (Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, & George, 2004). The author then believes that the study provides an opportunity for Vietnamese immigrant families to raise their own voices and share their stories in bridging the partnerships with the Canadian schools and communities. At the same time, the findings can reveal immigrant and ethnic aspects that influence Vietnamese immigrant parents' representation and practices of their role. In addition, the findings about barriers faced by Vietnamese immigrant parents may possibly explain their own involvement patterns.

On the other hand, the study focused on how the partnerships in an early learning program are significant as during this period of a child's life, not only the child but also parents are introduced to new and emerging partnerships with the school and some extended communities.

Moreover, the findings generate for educators' and administrators' better understandings of immigrant parents' involvement and better prepare them to strengthen the partnerships. Ultimately, the findings provide educators and administrators with some strategies to assist immigrant parents' involvement in their children's early learning or create a more comprehensive partnership program.

In addition, the findings from the study provide implications for researchers, educators, and professionals in conceptualizing the partnerships and developing comprehensive pre-service

and in-service training for would-be-teachers at the early learning level to equip them with the knowledge and skills to establish and strengthen the partnerships with parents and community members, particularly with immigrant parents. As a result, children, especially immigrant children, should benefit from a better partnership program possibly designed based on the implications of this study.

Delimitations

The following delimitations were applied to this study and limited the findings:

The study was delimited to the Vietnamese immigrant families who lived in Saskatoon and included at least one child, between the ages of three to five, enrolled in an early learning program, and not yet enrolled in a kindergarten program.

Due to the in-depth nature of the study, three sets of the Vietnamese immigrant parents were selected to participate in the study. Therefore, these Vietnamese immigrant parents might not be representative of the larger population of the Vietnamese immigrant parents in Saskatchewan.

Furthermore, the capacity to generalize the research findings was delimited to a relatively small sample of daycare teachers and community members used in this study. In order to collect the data from these participants, I conducted only one interview session with each of them. Due to delimited engagement, it was not possible to generalize the research findings to groups of daycare teachers and community members. Finally, the generalizability of the research findings was also delimited to the time frame of one year in which I conducted this research study.

Limitations

Due to the Confucian cultural heritage deeply rooted in daily lives of East Asian parents including the Vietnamese immigrant parents, all relationships are hierarchical except for the

relationships among friends at the same age. Respect or reverence is the most essential of the qualities in a Confucian hierarchical society (Shils, 1996). Therefore elders, teachers, and men are assumed to have superior hierarchical positions that demand respect and obedience from others. Consequently, the participants of this study, particularly the Vietnamese immigrant parents, directly and indirectly express their hesitation in providing honest answers to interview questions regarding teachers and community members' support for their involvement. To help increase participants' tendencies to answer honestly, selected parents were fully informed about the anonymity and confidentiality of participating in the research. No actual participants' names are included in this research report.

In addition, the utilization of this qualitative research design also has some potential limitations. First, conducting a case study may challenge the researcher in determining the bounded system(s) or the case(s) (Creswell, 2013). Finally, in qualitative research, the researcher is intimately embedded in the research process. It is a potential danger that the researcher may become too personally involved in the outcomes of the study. In order to minimize this danger, constant cross-checking of data with participants is recommended as a useful tool used by ethical researchers.

Definitions

Early learning programs: Early learning programs include childcare and Pre-kindergarten programs (Government of Saskatchewan, 2014).

Immigrants: Immigrants are defined as (a) the number of people who immigrate to Canada with Saskatchewan as their first residence and (b) the number of people who were born outside Canada and now make Saskatchewan their home regardless of where they originally settled (Sask Trends Monitor, 2007).

Parents: For the purpose of this study, the term “parents” implies the child’s significant care-givers including mother and father. In addition, this study also includes grandparents including grandfather and grandmother as family members.

Community: Community includes not only the neighbourhoods where students’ homes and schools are located but also any neighbourhoods that influence their learning and development (Epstein, 1997).

Community members: For the purpose of the study, community members are selected based on the proximal relationship with the child.

Partnership: A partnership is a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility for the achievement of a specified goal.

School, family, and community partnerships: School-family-community partnerships are formalized relationships among a school or school district, formal or informal organizations and institutions in the community and parents. Participants may include school staff, students, families, and staff from community organizations.

Ethnicity: For the purpose of this study, ethnicity refers to an individual’s sense of belonging to a group of people sharing a common origin and history, along with similar cultural and beliefs. Ethnicity may imply national and geographical origin (Lu, Lim, & Mezzich, 1995).

Culture: Culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a particular group has learned as it solves its problems. Those assumptions become acceptable ways of doing things (Schein, 1992, p. 12).

Summary of the Chapter One

In this introduction, the researcher has presented the background of school, family, and community partnerships in international and Canadian contexts by clarifying the various terms

and definitions of the multidimensional relationships among the school, family, and community. The researcher has also briefly outlined the benefits of the partnerships and factors that may challenge immigrant parents to get involved in their child's learning at school settings. In this first chapter, Epstein's (1997) Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence was introduced as a theoretical framework of this study and some criticism of Epstein's (1997) theory was simultaneously provided. In addition, the researcher's personal story and the problems that formed the rationale of the study have been presented. The purpose of the study, the significance of the study, definitions of terms, delimitations, and limitations were addressed in this chapter. Further information about school, family, and community partnerships, particularly of immigrant Asian families would be presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature maintains that school, family, and community partnerships result in critical benefits for every partner, especially when considering a child's education (Epstein et al., 1997; Finn, 1998; Gonzalez, 2002; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Young & Levin, 2002). Furthermore, partnerships involve more than the "basics of establishing good relationships with parents and using community resources" (Barbour, Barbour, & Scully, 2011, p. 44). This chapter briefly presents the history of school, family, and community partnerships to investigate how the partnerships were originated and formalized in modern times. Saskatchewan legislation supporting such partnerships is reviewed in the second section of this chapter. The last section generally reviews school, family, and community partnerships including related definitions and a discussion of the importance of partnerships; after that, the school, family, and community partnerships of Asian immigrant families are discussed.

History of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Partnerships in education, historically known as parental involvement, are not a new concept because the involvement of various groups in a child's learning and development has been generally recognized during the past decades. Throughout history, theorists and researchers have stressed specific but different elements and aspects regarding a child's learning and development. All the theories have influenced how families, schools, and communities identify their roles in educating children (Barbour, Barbour, & Scully, 2011).

Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) recognized young children's great potential for learning and emphasized the role of mothers as the best educator of their children. He also

praised mothers on individualizing their instruction due to children's different rates of development (Follari, 2007). John Locke (1632-1704) emphasized the significant influences of environment on children's behavior. In his belief, a child's mind is a blank slate that absorbs all stimuli from others and from the environment to learn and develop (Barbour, Barbour, & Scully, 2011; Berger, 1991; Prior & Gerard, 2007). Similarly, B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) suggested that children learn as a result of conditioning by adults who provide stimuli and reward correct responses.

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), known as the father of kindergartens in the nineteenth century, believed that children learn best with parental involvement, particularly in the early years. Thus the kindergarten movement carried the tradition of involving parents (Berger, 1991). In the early twentieth century, Jean Piaget (1896-1980) who represented interactionism, claimed that adults should provide a rich and stimulating environment that assists children in interacting with that environment as they construct their own knowledge (Barbour, Barbour, & Scully, 2011).

Whereas researchers within cognitive constructivist theories maintained that both biological and environmental factors affect children's development in a reciprocal manner, theorists within sociocultural constructivist frameworks like Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), and of the ecological system like Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005), also considered cultural, sociological, and historical factors as an important contribution to children's development. Vygotsky (1978) strongly insisted that children interact differently with different adults and that their learning is determined through the progress of these interactions over time. Furthermore, it is social interaction that children experience within their unique cultural and historical context that formulates their own unique developmental pattern. Likewise, Bronfenbrenner (1994)

proposed an ecological system composed of five socially organized subsystems that either directly or indirectly influence children's growth. These subsystems range from the microsystem referring to the relationship between a child and his/her immediate environment, such as family and school, to a macrosystem referring to institutional patterns of culture, such as economy and custom.

In short, these early theories of children's development have rooted not only adults' views about how children learn best but also their views of who is responsible for children's education. The 21st century brought rapid change to our society due to the development of the Internet and globalization. Changes in ideology and in social, cultural, and political circumstances have resulted in the change in types of relationship and dominant role that each of three social settings (home, school, and community) has in the lives of children (Barbour, Barbour, & Scully, 2011).

While various theories regarding child development underpinned different viewpoints of school, family, and community partnerships, the partnerships in practice have been dramatically changing throughout history. In the early times, parents played an important role as children's nurturers and educators in the home setting. There was no education other than that offered by the extended family and clan in primitive cultures (Berger, 1991). Children learned through modeling, oral communications, care giving, direct guidance, and observation of family and community. As civilization developed, children continued to receive their first education in their homes; later formal education outside home setting was added.

In the 17th century, education in Canada among indigenous people was usually an informal process in which skills and values were passed from one generation to the next by parents, relatives and older siblings. During the 18th and the early 19th centuries, families

remained the unrivalled setting for education. Due to British and French colonization of North America, small numbers of children began to receive formal education, either from tutors or in schools. Until the early 19th century the concept of formal schooling was becoming more widespread among social leaders in Canada. By the 1840s, the structure of modern school systems in Canada was clearly identified (the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, 2012).

After the North-West Territory School Ordinance was passed in 1884, the history of Saskatchewan formal education was begun (Noonan, Hallman, & Scharf, 2006). This action can be considered as a starting point of sharing responsibilities for educating children between parents and schools in the province of Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan's early days, local governance of schools was largely the responsibility of parents and other community members (Saskatchewan School Board Association, n.d.). There were over 5000 school districts across the province, each of which had its own school board. However, although schools were very close to their communities the educational expectations were different. Due to the need of a labor force either at home or on farms, few children continued their study at a secondary level. In 1944, the first major reform in the educational system amalgamated rural, village, and town districts into larger units of administration. The District Boards of Trustees or Local Boards were retained for each school attendance area in rural Saskatchewan. This was intended to maintain a supportive relationship between the school and community and to provide opportunities for parent and community involvement in school-level decision-making (Saskatchewan School Board Association, n.d.).

In addition, in 1980, eleven community schools were designated in the core neighborhoods of Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert to address the issues of urban Aboriginal poverty. These community schools were founded upon the principles of community education

rooted in community development. With the beliefs that children come to school as whole beings and the understandings of reciprocal difficulties children experience at home or in school and how these experiences impact on their well-being and success, these community schools took into account children's cultural and socio-economic life experiences and attempted to provide a range of comprehensive support in order to meet children's learning needs. This philosophy became an effective way in building a strong relationship with families and communities (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005).

In 2001, the school task force recommended that all Saskatchewan schools adopt the Community School philosophy (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005). Up until now, the school relationships with families and communities in Saskatchewan communities have moved beyond traditional partnerships. Instead, authentic partnerships have been promoted to support shared management and shared governance of the provincial education system (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003).

Legislation Supporting School, Family, and Community Partnerships in Saskatchewan

As the historical review suggested, Saskatchewan's educational community recognized the value and importance of family and community engagement. The Education Act 1995 included the provision of establishing Local School Advisory Committees in the cities to complement the District Boards of Trustees in rural Saskatchewan. In 2006, School Community Councils replaced all legislated District Boards of Trustees and Local School Advisory Committees throughout Saskatchewan. School Community Councils worked with parents and community to develop shared responsibility for the learning success and well-being of all children and youth. School Community Councils encouraged and facilitated the involvement of youth, parents and the community in school planning and improvement processes (Saskatchewan

School Board Association, n.d.). In addition, there also existed other types of parent and community groups operating in many schools such as Parent Councils, Home and School Associations, and Parent-Teacher Associations. Although these groups were not provided for in the legislation they assisted with school activities, provided advice in specific areas, and raised funds on behalf of the individual schools (Saskatchewan School Board Association, n.d.).

In 1999, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education published the policy framework of parent and community partnerships in education. This framework clarified a rationale to establish and strengthen parent and community partnerships in education including improving student performance, fostering shared responsibilities, creating enhanced opportunities for parents, Aboriginal peoples and other community members to be involved in education, and strengthening public confidence and accountability. The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education also acknowledged that the partnerships were remarkably beneficial for students, parents, teachers, schools and communities. Six principles were developed to guide family and community partnerships in education as follows:

Child-centred: This principle stresses that children and young people are the heart of the school. Thus all programs, services, and partnerships are developed for their best interest, well-being, and education.

Family-focused: Parents and caregivers have the right and responsibility to be partners in their children's education. As a primary provider in meeting children's needs, the family is advised to be an active partner in education to provide valuable information about their children's learning styles and needs.

Cooperation and partnership: In order to provide comprehensive support that meet students' diverse learning needs, educators, students, families, community members, and human

service agencies are encouraged to work together. The partnerships are identified for the purposes of shared planning, problem solving, and creating resources.

Community: With the acknowledgement that strong and stable communities are key contributors to students' well-being and education, schools and educators foster and strengthen a commitment to a sense of community in their neighborhoods.

Equity and respect for diversity: This principle ensures that every child, young people, and adults are treated the same despite their different capabilities, potential, culture, and experience.

Quality and excellence: Parent and community partnerships that strengthen the learning program and opportunities for student success definitely enhance the school quality and make the school's goal of excellence become achievable.

(Saskatchewan Education, 1999, pp. 8-9)

Most of the principles listed in the framework placed the emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of parents and community members in building partnerships and identified the partnership goals in terms of shared planning, problem solving, and creating resources. The scope of parent and community partnerships, partnership activities, and responsibilities was outlined. It was included in the framework that involvement at all levels was valued and important as it contributed to the goal of shared ownership for the education and well-being of students (Saskatchewan Education, 1999).

The *Final Report of the Task Force on the Role of the School* in 2002 strongly confirmed that the role of schools had changed for the development and well-being of the whole child. It was said that schools needed to be more responsive towards social, economic, cultural, demographic as well as educational factors. In order to meet the diverse learning needs of

children, it was essential for schools to formalize partnerships with parents and community members (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002).

The 2003 policy framework for Saskatchewan's prekindergarten to grade 12 educational system, entitled *Building Partnerships: First Nations and Métis Peoples and the Provincial Education System*, stressed that the "partnerships are qualitatively different from many traditional partnerships and public involvement initiatives" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003, p. 3). As envisioned in the 2003 policy framework, the partnerships in the 2005 resource guide, *Building Partnerships: Educational Service Agreements*, are defined as *authentic partnerships* which focus on "promoting equitable, amicable working relationships that involve shared decision making and shared accountability, while maintaining a high level of mutual respect and understanding" (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005, p. 3). Finally, regarding the partnerships at the prekindergarten level, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education developed the handbook entitled *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Best Practices Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten* which was originally published in the years 1996-1997. In this handbook, family engagement and community partnerships are considered as two important components of a prekindergarten program. In short, the Saskatchewan Government definitely recognized the essential need of a shared responsibility among schools, families and communities to ensure children's well-being and education in Saskatchewan. As a result, the issues of family and community partnerships have been central in the formation of a number of the government's key policy directions in recent years.

Nevertheless, as the First Nation peoples were the Province's first inhabitants and shared with the Métis peoples a historically unique place in society, the provincial education system has focused attention on providing First Nations and Métis students with learning opportunities and

supports that are responsive to their needs and aspirations (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003). The Minister of Learning envisioned a shared future that “create new and strengthened relationships and mechanism so that First Nations and Métis peoples have an equitable voice in planning and decision making” in the Prekindergarten to Grade 12 education system (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003, p. 2). As a result, the partnerships in education in the province of Saskatchewan have been created and developed in order to ensure the well-being and education opportunities for First Nations and Métis students.

Thanks to immigration policies of the provincial government, the number of immigrants in Saskatchewan has dramatically increased. Specifically, the number of newcomers obtaining permanent residency in Saskatchewan went from 2,119 in 2005, to 4,835 in 2008, and 7,615 in 2010 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010, p. 27). According to the Saskatchewan Statistical Immigration Report in the years of 2009-2011, the province of Saskatchewan reached an all-time population high in 2011. Immigration was the greatest contributing factor, accounting for approximately 65 per cent of the population growth. The number of immigrants at school ages accounted for 33.9 per cent out of the total number (Ministry of the Economy, 2011, p. 5). This remarkable number of immigrants at school ages has brought both opportunities and challenges for the education system in Saskatchewan. Schools in Saskatchewan have been challenged in meeting the diverse learning needs of students of different cultural backgrounds and languages (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005).

While the partnerships between First Nations and Métis populations and the provincial education system placed an emphasis on the Saskatchewan Government’s policy, the partnerships between immigrant populations with the provincial education system has not received much attention. Bridging the connections between schools and immigrant families and

communities may lessen the challenges and ensure well-being and equal education for immigrant children. Therefore, it is time for the provincial education system to revise and transform the relationships among school, family, and community not only for the Aboriginal populations but also for immigrant populations in order to achieve one important partnership goal that is “high quality learning programs for all students” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003).

School, Family, and Community Partnerships

The literature of school, family, and community partnerships is presented into three subsections. In the first subsection, I briefly review various definitions that both international and Canadian researchers used to address the collaborations of the teacher, parents, and community members in order to support children’s learning and development. The significant benefits of the school, family, and community partnerships are discussed in the second subsection. Finally, I describe different roles that parents should play to become involved in their children’s learning and development. In this last subsection, Epstein’s (1997) classification of parental involvement types is provided in detail.

Toward a definition of school, family, and community partnerships. One of the challenges in reviewing the literature regarding school, family, and community relation is that the relationship between home and school is defined in many different ways due to the complexity of this relation and the multidimensional nature of parent, teacher, and community member influences on children (Georgiou, 1996; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, Walberg, 2005; Prior & Gerard, 2007). There are a number of researchers who prefer terms such as “parent participation,” “parental engagement,” and “parent involvement” to describe parent beliefs, behaviours, and practices of parental involvement in their children’s formal education (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, Walberg, 2005; Potter, 1989).

The term “parental involvement” is frequently used in most research. However, researchers who preferred to use the term “parental engagement” believed that the term “involvement” just describes things parents do whereas the term “engagement” can expand researchers’ understanding to include parents’ orientations to the world and how those orientations frame the things they do (Barton et al., 2004). Goodall and Montgomery (2013) also argued that parental engagement, especially with children’s learning, involves a “greater commitment” and a “greater ownership of an action” rather than a more narrow involvement with schools (p. 2).

Meanwhile other researchers believed that parent involvement is generally considered as “a process *en route* to partnerships” because when parent involvement reaches a certain level, the term “school, family, and community partnerships” should be used to refer a long-term relationship, built upon mutual respect, genuineness, and a sharing mode (Georgiou, 1996, p. 33).

In addition, the term “parent involvement” is traditionally used as a unidimensional concept which simply describes a broad range of activities that present parents’ investment of resources to facilitate their child’s positive development (Prior & Gerard, 2007; Sy, Rowley, & Schulenberg, 2007). In recent years, a majority of researchers have reached a consensus that “school, family, and community partnerships” is a better term because it recognizes that parents, educators, and others in the community share interests and responsibilities for children’s learning and development (Barbour et al., 2011; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Patrikakou et al., 2005; Prior & Gerard, 2007).

Moreover, it is also well-documented that “school, family, and community partnerships” is a multidimensional concept that explains various ways in which parents sustain their children’s physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development by working together with the

school and community (Barbour et al., 2011; Epstein, 2002; Epstein & Sheldon, 2006; Patrikakou et al., 2005; Sohn, 2007). This study utilized the broad and multidimensional concept of school, family, and community partnerships as stated above. On the other hand, this study also considered *authentic partnerships* that focus on “promoting equitable, amicable working relationships that involve shared decision making and shared accountability, while maintaining a high level of mutual respect and understanding” as stated in the Saskatchewan resource guides, namely “Building Partnerships: Educational Service Agreements” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005, p.3).

The importance of school, family, and community partnerships. Over the past decades, a large body of literature has documented that school, family, and community each play an important role in the process of educating children (Epstein, 2008; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Kelley-Laine, 1998; El Nokali et al., 2010). Numerous studies have presented a multitude of benefits when parents and community members are involved in their children’s education (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001; Jeynes, 2003; 2005; 2007; Sheldon, 2007). Students who receive greater involvement from parents and community members evidence high test scores (Sheldon, 2003), better attendance and higher motivation toward high school (Gonzalez, 2002; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton-Lee, 1989), homework completion (Cancio, West, & Young, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2001), and better behavior (Pantil et al., 2003).

Furthermore, school, family, and community partnerships have been recognized as important for children’s educational success all the way to the high school level (Epstein, 2008; Jeynes, 2005; 2007; El Nokali et al., 2010; Sanders & Lewis, 2005; Sénéchal & LeFerve, 2002; Sheldon, 2003). For example, after utilizing a meta-analysis of 41 studies to examine the relation

between parental involvement and urban students' achievement at the elementary level, Jeynes (2005) concluded that parental involvement had a positive influence on urban elementary students' academic success. Another meta-analysis of 52 studies, conducted to examine the relation between parental involvement and urban students' academic outcomes at the secondary level, maintains positive effects of parental involvement for both Caucasian and minority urban students at secondary schools (Jeynes, 2007). Examining the influence of parental involvement at high school level, Gonzalez (2002) also found that when parents expressed their interest in their children's education by being actively involved, high school students were more likely to seek challenges, and experience satisfaction in their schoolwork.

At the same time, researchers have repeatedly stated that school, family, and partnerships are beneficial not only for students but also for families, schools and communities. When involved in children's education, families feel more confident in helping children with schoolwork at home, and more sensitive to children's social, emotional, and intellectual needs (Zygmunt-Fillwalk, 2011). Epstein (1995) added that when families are informed about teachers' support for their children's learning, families' expectations for children's success increase. Increased involvement in their children's education provides parents greater opportunities to enhance their understanding of their children's education process as well as to improve their collaboration with school personnel and teachers (Mapp, 2003). On the other hand, thanks to the involvement of parents and community members, schools and teachers also benefit. While teachers have more time to devote to their teaching and to pay more individual attention to children schools achieve a higher degree of trust and increased willingness to support innovative changes at school (Davis, 1997, 1996). Furthermore, due to the changing family demographics, demand of the professional workplace, and growing diversity among students, schools and

families also call for community involvement in order to strengthen “social capital” available to children and provide children with the resources they need to be competent citizens in the 21st century (Sanders, 2001; Sanders & Lewis, 2005).

In short, school, family, and community partnerships have significant contributions to children’s success. Traditionally schools and families have been viewed as two settings with the greatest effect on a child’s development; however nowadays “families and schools alone cannot provide sufficient resources to ensure that all children receive the experiences and support needed to succeed in a larger society” (Sanders, 2001, p. 20). Therefore, communities also play an important part in supporting schools and families in order to meet the diverse learning needs of students and provide them needed resources for their development and success.

Forms of school, family, and community partnerships. Having acknowledged the necessity and significant benefits of strong school, family, and community partnerships, researchers have suggested various forms of involvement that schools, families, and communities utilize to fulfill their shared responsibilities for children’s education and development (Epstein, 1995; 2002; Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders, & Simon, 1997; Sanders, 2001).

Regarding school-family partnerships, many researchers have attempted to classify types of parental involvement (Bauch, 1994; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Gordon and Breivogel (1976) proposed six roles parents should play when they interact with schools, namely (a) teacher of own child, (b) decision-maker, (c) classroom volunteer, (d) para-professional, (e) adult educator, and (f) adult learner. Cervone and O’Leary (1982) suggested five types of parental involvement: (a) reporting progress, (b) special events, (c) parent education, (d) parent teaching, and (e) educational decision maker. Williams and Chavkin (1989) categorized parental

involvement into six roles: (a) audience, (b) home tutor, (c) program supporter, (d) co-cleaner, (e) advocate, and (f) decision maker. Likewise, Berger (1992) identified six considerably overlapping roles that focus on what parents might do at home, at school, and in other situations such as (a) teacher of own child, (b) spectators, (c) employed resources, (d) temporary volunteers, (e) volunteer resources, and (f) policymakers.

In terms of school-community partnerships, Sanders (2001) discussed how schools can promote their linkage with communities by working with either businesses or service organizations such as churches and libraries which can provide resources and social support to children. Common activities include mentoring and tutoring, contextual learning and job shadowing, academic enrichment, as well as the provision and allocation of services, equipment, and supplies to students and schools. However, whilst a number of studies presented parent involvement with specific roles that parents should play (Gordon, 1979; Berger, 1991; Chavkin & William, 1993) and community involvement with specific activities (Sanders, 2001) separately, Epstein (1995; 1997; 2002; 2008) recommended forms of school, family, and community partnerships that are unique in reflecting the overlapping influences of school, home and community (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

Epstein et al. (1997) proposed a framework including six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the whole community.

The first type, *parenting*, includes suggestions to help all families establish a home environment to support children as students at each grade level. In addition, the first type involves the assistance for families with health, nutrition, and other services (Epstein et al., 1997).

The second type, *communicating*, describes effective forms of two-way-communication (school-to-home and home-to-school) about school programs and children's progress. Two-way-communication can take place in the form of parent-teacher conference, report cards, phone calls or school newsletters (Epstein et al., 1997).

The third type, *volunteering*, relates to the recruitment and organization of parents' help and support such as parents volunteering in classroom and school activities. When participating in school functioning, parent involvement can increase parents' connection with teachers and other school personnel (Epstein et al., 1997).

The fourth type, *learning at home*, includes information and ideas for families about how to assist and supervise their child's learning in the home setting with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

The fifth type, *decision-making*, highlights the parents' voice in school decision-making and develops parent leaders and representatives. For example, schools either establish networks to link all families with parent representatives or they can found advisory councils/ committees to enhance parent leadership and participation. By participating in such organizations, parents, on one hand, can contribute their insights and ideas about school programs with school administrators and teachers. On the other hand parents can develop their expertise as advocates and leaders through sharing their opinions and making cooperative decisions with school administrators and teachers (Epstein et al., 1997).

The sixth type, *collaborating with the community*, calls for community involvement by identifying and integrating resources and services available within the community in order to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. For example, families can receive community support through after-school programs, childcare, and

summer programs whereas the community can benefit from such activities as families' arts and drama for seniors and others (Epstein et al., 1997).

Overall, Epstein et al. (1997) presented each type of involvement illustrated by many different practices of partnerships. Outcomes of involvement for students, parents, and teachers are estimated so that schools can choose practices that help them achieve important goals. However, in each type of involvement, Epstein et al. (1997) also anticipated specific challenges that need to be met in order to call for parent and community involvement, as well.

In summary, the general review of school, family, and community partnerships has provided readers with the definition of school, family, and community partnerships that will be used in this study. Also the importance of and forms of partnerships are discussed. However, from my personal point of view, these partnerships can vary according to the cultural contexts of different ethnic groups. Furthermore, examining school, family, and community partnerships in cultural context is one avenue for broadening the traditional perspective on how parents and community members become involved in children's early education (Sy, 2006).

While a large percentage of studies conducted on the American continent have addressed the characteristics and effects of school, family, and community partnerships on the European population, there exists an imbalance in recent research on the partnerships of immigrant populations, specifically Asian immigrant families (Jeynes, 2003; Kim, 2002, 2009). As a result, in comparison with other ethnic groups, school, family, and community partnerships among Asian immigrant families have been insufficiently explored. This leads to some limitations to the understanding of the nature of school, family, and community partnerships. The imbalance in recent research on the partnerships of immigrant populations, particularly Asian immigrants, also results in failure to figure out the most effective types of involvement adopted by the Asian

immigrant parents (Kim, 2002; Jeynes, 2003). The main aim of this study was to explore the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in an early learning program. Therefore, the next part of this discussion would review findings about the school, family, and community partnerships of many Asian immigrant groups.

Asian Immigrant Parents' Perspectives of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Researchers perceive that school, family, and community partnerships have positive influences on children's education and development regardless of social economic status and ethnicity. Furthermore, parents, across demographical boundaries, show their increasing interest in participating in their children's education (Epstein & Sanders, 1998). In general, research findings show that the Asian immigrant parents are not different from the European-American parents in their concern about and interest in their children's education (Daniel-White, 2002; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Hill & Craft, 2003; Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000). However, the ways that the two ethnic groups are involved in their children's education are reported to be significantly different (Chao, 2000; Schneider & Lee, 1990).

According to Sy and Schulenberg (2005), Asian-American parents showed a stronger endorsement of the importance of learning early academic skills and they regulate their children's learning environments at home at a greater level than did other ethnic groups. In another longitudinal comparative study that involved well-educated Chinese immigrant parents and their children and European-American parents and their children, Huntsinger, Jose, Larson, Krieg, and Shaligram (2000) found that the Chinese immigrant parents use more systematic teaching of their children, especially in mathematics, and schedule their children's time more closely. Mau (1997) added that whereas the European-American parents tend to participate in school functioning more than the Asian immigrant parents, the latter group have higher

expectations of their children's education. This can be explained by the finding that the Asian immigrant parents highly value education as a means for upward mobility and success, and they prefer their children spending time on academic activities instead of unrelated-to-school activities, and they insist their children on spending a certain amount of time each day on schoolwork (Schneider & Lee, 1990). As a result, children of the Asian immigrant families generally academically outperform the Caucasian students. More participation at home though results in their children's higher achievement in school, especially in mathematics (Mau, 1997).

However, regardless of their children's higher achievement in schools, the Asian immigrant parents are reported to volunteer less directly in schools' activities than the European-American parents (Kim, 2002; 2009; Sohn & Wang, 2006). Sohn and Wang (2006) made the point that although Asian immigrant parents are highly interested in their children's education, most of them are content with their roles as helpers at home. This also affirmed the findings in Mau (1997) that the Asian students tended to do more homework due to their parents' closer supervision at home.

To explain the lower level of direct participation in school programs among the Asian immigrant parents, research also shows that the Asian immigrant parents were inclined to leave their children's education at school entirely to the teacher. This was due to their high respect for the teachers' authority. Due to the strong belief in Confucianism, a philosophy including "a complex set of ethical and moral rules that dictate how a person relates to others" (Huang & Gove, 2012, p. 10) Asian immigrant parents avoid giving ideas and suggestions to teachers because they perceive that it may show the disrespect for teachers when they challenge teachers' wisdom and authority (Sohn & Wang, 2006; Sy, 2006).

In short, the indirect involvement of Asian immigrant parents appears to be influenced

by their value for education and respect for authority. This has been proved to be true among several Asian groups such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese (Collignon, Men, & Tan, 2001; Dyson, 2001; Hofstede, 2001; Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003; Kim, 2009). In addition to the Asian immigrant parents' perspectives of school, family, and community partnerships, there existed a number of barriers that influence their involvement. Such barriers are explored in the next part of this review.

Barriers to the School, Family, and Community Partnerships of Asian Immigrant Families

If, in fact, there is no difference in the interest in their children's education between Asian immigrant parents and their other counterparts, it is essential to figure out why they do not actually go directly to their children's school. When Asian immigrant parents are invisible in their children's school, despite their strong willingness to be fully involved in their children's lives, there must be reasons for this lack of participation in school life (Kim, 2009). This can be partly explained by Asian cultural perspective that includes valuing education and a respect for authority, as described above. However, numerous studies have documented various barriers that hinder Asian immigrant parents from actually participating in their children's school (Collignon, Men, & Tan, 2001; Dyson, 2001; Kim, 2009; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009).

First, Asian immigrant parents are often challenged by language barriers from building direct contact with teachers and in participating in school activities (Constantino, Cui, & Faltis, 1995; Daniel-White, 2002; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Sohn & Wang, 2006). In Sohn and Wang's (2006) research, Korean immigrant mothers confessed that they had difficulties communicating with teachers in English. On the other hand, because of their limited English language, these Korean immigrant parents tend to maintain their cultural traditions by forming their own social networks in their native Korean community. As a result, their social interaction with English

native speakers and their opportunities to practice speaking English are limited. In addition, most Korean mothers did not receive any language support such as interpreter services from school. Consequently, they appeared to be reluctant to participate actively in schools and demonstrated a passive attitude. Instead of communicating directly with teachers, these immigrant parents tended to communicate with their children's teachers through e-mails because they could understand written English better than spoken English (Sohn & Wang, 2006). In some other research, Chinese immigrant parents were also found to have problems communicating with teachers and assisting their children with their homework because of the language barrier (Constantino et al., 1995).

Furthermore, parents' lack of understandings about how the school system works may be a potential obstacle to parental involvement in school activities. Korean immigrant mothers in the study hesitated to communicate with teachers because of their limited knowledge of educational terms and of norms for communicating with teachers (Sohn & Wang, 2006). Theilheimer (2001) explained that parents who have grown up in a culture outside North America may hold different views of schools and children rather than those of their children's teachers. This situation is also true of Vietnamese immigrant parents. The finding of Hwa-Froelich and Westby's (2003) research shows that Vietnamese-American immigrant parents did not voluntarily seek parent-school contact. In contrast, they even felt confused as to why their child's teacher wanted this type of involvement and how it would be helpful. Researchers also found that Chinese immigrant parents appeared to place more emphasis on education and they monitored their children's learning more structurally (Chao, 1996).

Another barrier, related to physically demanding jobs, seems to be creating challenges for Asian immigrant parents (Finders & Lewis, 1994). Harris and Goodall (2008) made it clear that

lack of time and childcare difficulties also seemed to be significant factors. Most Asian parents found the main limitation to actual involvement in their children's education and their availability to attend school events arose from the demands on their time through the restrictions of work (Harris & Goodall, 2008). Therefore, some groups of Asian immigrant parents including Bangladeshi and Pakistani parents are perceived as "hard to reach" parents by teachers and other education professionals due to their lack of participation in, and understanding about school activities and events (Crozier & Davies, 2005). However, Crozier and Davies (2005) argued whether it was these parents or the schools that are "hard to reach". They also claimed that the notion "hard to reach" as a criticism of parents may create misunderstanding of Asian immigrant parents' interests in their children's education and serve as an excuse by schools for not being more proactive (Crozier & Davies, 2005).

The last barrier is the lack of school support, in particular for Asian immigrant groups, arising from teachers' and administrator's perception of parental involvement. Some teachers and administrators underestimated the benefits of parental involvement in school and classroom activities. They also feared that parental involvement might create overlapping control over the school and classroom (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). As mentioned above, some teachers made assumptions that some parents were not interested or did not care about their children's education whereas parents often felt ignorant about the curriculum and ways of teaching in schools (Hornby, 2000). According to Hornby (2000), parents might legitimately believe that teachers were seeking a superficial relationship and are only concerned with addressing problems rather than finding solutions. This lack of mutual understanding between teachers and parents may increase barriers and a lack of trust. Furthermore, Sohn and Wang (2006) also found that Korean immigrant mothers did not receive sufficient support from their children's schools.

Limited time and opportunities to communicate with teachers and limited language support services were cited as barriers by these Korean immigrant mothers. In addition teachers' lack of knowledge and skills of working with parents of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds appeared to be also a significant barrier (Sohn & Wang, 2006).

In summary, little research has been conducted on the school, family, and community partnerships of the Asian immigrant families, particularly those of Vietnamese immigrant families. In addition, most studies have focused on the school-home connection and have not examined the partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in the broader context that includes the community these families live in. This review of the partnerships of the Asian immigrant families is original in the field as it provides readers with a window into how the Asian immigrant population, of which Vietnamese immigrants are a subgroup, partners with the school and their community to support their children's formal education. However, the Vietnamese immigrants are not entirely reflective of Asians in general, possessing a distinct nationality and unique characteristics. Thus, they should not be considered as homogenous to other Asian ethnic groups. In terms of the necessity of further research, it would be greatly significant to conduct a studies to illuminate more details related to Asian immigrants.

Summary of the Chapter Two

In this chapter "Literature Review", I examined some aspects of school, family, and community partnerships which ranged from the historical perspectives to current research on the partnerships. The literature asserted that school, family, and community partnerships are significant for children of all ages, particularly for young children during their transition to a new environment out of their home setting. In addition, the review of some legislative documents regarding school, family, and community partnerships issued in the Province of Saskatchewan

expressed an emphasis on school, family, and community partnerships at all levels, and a tendency to change from tradition partnerships to authentic partnerships in this province's education system. In this chapter, I also investigated various terms that international researchers used to address the relationship among the teacher, parents, and other adults who share interest in and responsibilities for children's education in different settings as well as numerous roles of parents in their children's formal education. Finally, Asian immigrant parents' perspectives and their difficulties in building school, family, and community partnerships were presented.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used for exploring the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada. In this chapter, the researcher's epistemology, qualitative methods, the researcher's roles, research design, and research questions are described, together with the specific procedures for data collection and analysis. The trustworthiness and ethical issues of the study are also considered.

Social Constructionism as the Researcher's Epistemology

Today's world may be defined as the world of constructs and all constructs can be classified as mental or social in which social constructs have become of great interest to constructionists (Burr, 2003; Jha, 2012). The term "constructionism," particularly "social constructionism" derives largely from the work of George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Mead, 1934), and later from the work of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Berger & Luckman, 1967). When the idea of social constructionism was initially formulated in Berger and Luckman's (1967) work, the issue of meaning was the central focus of their discussion (Harris, 2010).

Social constructionists believed that meaning cannot be discovered; rather, it can only be constructed by human beings as they engage with the world (Burr, 2003; Crotty, 1998; Harris, 2010). Crotty (1998) emphasized that "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social

context”(p. 42). Within the social constructionism framework, “it is not the individual’s mind in which knowledge, reason, emotion, and morality reside, but in relationships” (Jha, 2012, p. 173).

Furthermore, Harris (2010) also added that human beings have more than one way to build or define something. Similarly, other social constructionists suggested that knowledge is constructed among people sharing a language and perspective; however, there can be multiple perspectives which are constantly open to revision as boundaries expand (Burr, 2003; Slife & Williams, 1995). Additionally, knowledge and meaning are both historically and culturally specific and relative. Thus due to the historical and cultural relativity, it is suggested not to assume that one way is better or any more near the truth than another (Burr, 2003).

In short, constructionists believe that human beings are all introduced to a world of meaning through the complex and subtle processes of the cultures into which they are born (Crotty, 1998). Crotty (1998) also highlighted “different people may well inhabit quite different worlds. Their different worlds constitute for them diverse ways of knowing, distinguishable sets of meanings, and separate realities (p. 64). Therefore it is common knowledge that researchers who identify themselves as constructionists are not seeking a single truth or objective reality through their research; rather they seek to create meaning with their participants through a subjective and transactional research process (Schwartz, 2009).

At the same time, researchers are also warned that as meaning is constructed within culture, history, and time, social constructionism is thus ontologically relative (Burr, 2003; Patton, 2002). There is no standard against which researchers can validate the claim of social constructionism, except to continue using the perspective in the analysis of different issues (Burr, 2003; Patton, 2002). Due to the relativity of social constructionism, any understandings of social phenomena generated through this approach are limited in generalizability (Schwartz, 2009).

Nevertheless, social constructionism can capture and respect the multi-perspectives of participants because when exploring a phenomenon, social constructionism provides readers with much insight into that phenomenon as it draws on the lived experiences of the participants (Jankowski, Clark, & Ivey, 2000). In addition, social constructionism also emphasizes reflection on the researcher's part; therefore, it is suggested that researchers must be critically aware of their presence as a researcher and the implication of that presence (Burr, 2003; Patton, 2002).

As my epistemological stance in this study centers on social constructionism, I believe that knowledge is not only constructed by a child's interaction with his/her own world but also co-created by his/her interaction with other surrounding individuals within a specific social community. Corresponding to this perspective, it is essential to investigate children's learning and development within school, family, and community partnerships. Thus, in turn, school, family, and community partnerships should be accountable in order to understand and promote children's learning and growth.

On the other hand, Vietnamese immigrant parents who experience their unique interactions with their worlds may construct meanings regarding school, family, and community partnerships differently from their counterparts who do not share the same experiences. Within the study, I did not attempt to find the overall reality of the partnerships, but rather to construct meaning with particular participants in the study by exploring their personal stories and sharing in their interests in and responsibilities for children's education and development.

I also did not intend to find a single truth; rather my goal throughout the study was to understand the historical, sociocultural, and environmental contexts of each participant's unique story. Participants' meaning-making was impacted by a number of factors such as the time of the interaction, their family circumstances, their own social identities, and the current culture and

environment they are living in. Therefore, I did not exclude or marginalize these factors from the construction of knowledge and data analysis; instead, I co-constructed meaning by investigating these factors in order to figure out how these factors influence the overall story. Finally, I will provide readers an in-depth description of cases through my collective interactions with the participants and the participants' engagement with one another.

Qualitative Methods

Over the last two decades, qualitative research has become a developed field of study with its own literature base, research journals, special interest groups, and regularly scheduled conferences (Merriam, 2009). As there is little consensus among qualitative researchers about the qualitative worldviews and qualitative designs, numerous definitions of qualitative research are available. Atkinson (1991) simply defined qualitative research as a kind of prism providing a way to “represent the world” (p. 9). Meanwhile, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world” (p. 3).

These authors also added that:

At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3)

According to Creswell (2013), this definition reflects traditional approaches to qualitative research such as the “interpretive, naturalistic approach” and “meaning;” in addition, this definition strongly implies the impact of qualitative research in transforming the world.

However, Creswell (2013) offered another definition which focuses more on the research design and the use of each distinct approach. He defined qualitative research as follows:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voice of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or a call for change. (Creswell, 2013, p. 44)

A point made by one of the leaders in the field of qualitative research in education, Merriam (2009), was that in true qualitative fashion, each researcher makes sense of the field in a personal, socially constructed way. The overall purpose of qualitative research is to seek for the understanding of “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience” (Merriam, 2009, p. 14).

According to Merriam (2009), a central characteristic of qualitative research is that “individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds” (p. 22). Thus social constructionism, as described above, underlies what Merriam (2009) labeled as basic qualitative research. In addition, qualitative research relies heavily on descriptive data or rich descriptions. Moreover, in qualitative studies, concepts or theories are inductively produced after gathering and generating a large amount of descriptive data (Merriam, 2009).

In summary, qualitative research means many things to many individuals due to its complexity. The term “qualitative research” is used predominantly as an umbrella term to indicate research conducted in a natural setting to investigate a social or human problem (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Nevertheless, it has also been used synonymously with case study (Merriam, 1988), ethnography (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984), grounded theory (Neuman, 2004), phenomenology (Lancy, 1993), and naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consequently, the qualitative researcher today is being challenged with “a baffling array of options for conducting qualitative research” (Creswell, Hanson, Clark, & Morales, 2007, p. 236). In this study, I sought to gain the understanding of the concept of school, family, and community partnerships from Vietnamese immigrant parents’ point of view. Therefore, I used a qualitative case study design in order to fully explore the research questions, with key outcomes involving greater understandings of the phenomena at hand. The next section discusses briefly qualitative case study design and presents the advantages as well as limitations of using this research design.

Case Study as Research Design

Case study research has become one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) defined the case study research process as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are clearly evident” (p. 16). A case study allows researchers to “focus on a case, and retain a holistic and real-world perspective” (Yin, 2014, p. 4). Merriam (2009) defined a case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 40).

Creswell (2013) offered a methodology-oriented definition of case study research that aligned with the goals of this study. He defined the case study as “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case), or multiple bounded systems (cases) overtime, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case themes” (p.97). Creswell (2013) also indicated that a case study should allow for developing an in-depth analysis from a single case or multiple cases.

The researcher of this study chose the type of multiple case study. The participants of the study included three sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents who have at least one child attending an early learning program in Saskatoon. In addition, three teachers, two grandmothers, and one Vietnamese friend of a Vietnamese immigrant family who have the closest relationship with focal Vietnamese immigrant children were selected as the participants of the study. The following research questions were addressed:

1. In what ways do Vietnamese immigrant parents conceptualize school, family, and community partnerships related to their children’s early learning and development?
2. What supports and challenges do Vietnamese immigrant parents have in building and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships that facilitate their children’s early learning and development?
3. What practices related to the partnerships do Vietnamese immigrant parents adopt to assist their children’s early learning and development?

The selection of multiple case study design is beneficial in a way that it allows and encourages researchers to engage collaboratively with participants to fully address the topic.

Another benefit is the opportunity for the researcher to position himself or herself as both an insider and outsider. Furthermore, because of the recursive, flexible nature of qualitative research, the researcher can modify, extend, and collect additional data to fill the gaps. At the same time, using the case study methodology offers a good opportunity to empower individuals to share their own stories, to enable the researcher to hear the participants' voices, and to minimize the power relationships which often exist between a researcher and the participants of the study (Creswell, 2013).

The Researcher's Role as the Instrument

In this study, I was both an insider and outsider. From an insider stance, researchers conduct research with populations of which they are also members (Kanuha, 2000) so that the researcher shares an identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants (Asselin, 2003). As a result, the insider role status frequently allows researchers more rapid and more complete acceptance by the participants. Thus the participants are typically more open with researchers so that there may be a greater depth to the data gathered (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

As a Vietnamese immigrant, I shared common cultural values in the nurturing and educating of a child with other Vietnamese immigrant parents in Saskatchewan. The first cultural value emphasizes obedience and respect for adult authority. Besides, respect for the educators and their work has been strongly demonstrated in the Asian cultures throughout history (Cheung & Nguyen, 2001). Another commonality I have with the participants is a belief in the strength of family ties and family loyalties that support a community life. In Vietnam, there is an old saying, "blood is thicker than water" that shows the value of relationships with family members and relatives. This value is reflected in Vietnamese people's practices in daily life such as the

preference for living in an extended family, or the maintenance of family-reunited dinners (Nguyen, 2013). In addition to the common cultural background, my command of Vietnamese language allows me to communicate effectively with Vietnamese immigrant parents as the English language is frequently reported as a dominant barrier for immigrant parents in the local country (Kim, 2009; Sohn & Wang, 2007). At the same time, as an immigrant parent, I have experienced a lack of understanding of how the school system works. Due to this lack, I have hesitated to become involved in the school's activities, and particularly decision-making.

However, as a Vietnamese immigrant who was born and brought up in a peaceful period of the country, I did not come to Canada with the similar immigrant position of some Vietnamese participants whose parents landed in Canada as refugees for political reasons as a consequence of the Vietnam War during the late 1970s. Nguyen (2013) stated that these refugees are commonly known as “boat people” because they used to travel to Canada by boat. Therefore, when communicating with such Vietnamese immigrants, Nguyen (2013) recognized that their initial concern about her was the way she travelled to Canada. According to Nguyen (2013), the connotation of that concern would establish her immigrant status in Canada. It is common knowledge among Vietnamese people that if one says he or she travelled to Canada by boat, others will understand that he or she came under refugees' stream (Nguyen, 2013). The term “boat people” does not only refer to their way of travelling but also indicates their challenges, hardships, and losses that I personally have never experienced in the journey to Canada. These challenges, hardships, and even losses could have great impact on the perspectives of nurturing and educating a child among the first and second generations of Vietnamese immigrants in Canada. In these circumstances, I became an outsider of the study.

During the time I worked on this dissertation, positioning myself as both an insider and an outsider sometimes seemed rather challenging to me. For example, when I conducted interviews with a couple of Vietnamese immigrant parents I was told about their similar misbehaviour on Valentine's Day. As an insider who shares the same language and culture, I thoroughly understood the incident and their feelings about it. At the same time I sympathized with them as I used to experience this misbehaviour. In addition, I also acknowledged that there was a real risk that I might be drawn into collusion "I know how it is". However, as an outsider I attempted to maintain my distance from my participants with conscious attitude and reminded myself of my real interest in knowing how it is for my participants. In this sense, I felt motivated to explore these parents' own strategies to address their challenges and the ways their children's school support appeared to them in order to maintain and strengthen their bilateral partnerships.

While insider status may have undue influence of the researcher's perspective, being an outsider does not create immunity to the influence of personal perspective (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In summary, as both an insider and outsider in the study, I kept in mind that "the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience" (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 59).

Participants

Purposeful sampling, particularly snowball sampling, was used for the recruitment of participants for this study. This strategy involves selecting research participants according to the need of the study. The researcher chooses participants who can give a richness of information that is suitable for her detailed research. Snowball sampling involves locating a few key participants who easily meet the criteria determined for the participation in the study. When

interviewing these key participants, the researcher asks each one to refer her to other participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009).

When I was at a Christmas party hosted by the Vietnamese community in Saskatoon I gained contact information for the first set of Vietnamese immigrant parents who have one child attending an early learning program. During my initial contact with this set of parents, I provided them with information through a recruitment poster (see Appendix D). After obtaining contact information of the next four sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents, I arranged a meeting with each set of parents and distributed them the recruitment poster to briefly introduce myself and my research. Upon receiving the approval from the advisory committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science and Research, I scheduled the second meeting with each set of Vietnamese immigrant parents and explained the consent form (see Appendix E) to them. After all the information in the consent form had been clearly explained to the participants, the consent form was left for their signature indicating their voluntary participation in the study. Due to personal reasons, there were two families who could not participate in my research. Three other sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents who have at least one child attending an early learning program (either a daycare center or a prekindergarten program) were included in my study.

I also asked these three sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents to select a teacher who is currently working with their child and a community member who has the closest relationship with their child. Prior to contacting teacher participants, I obtained the permission from their director relating specifically to the teacher involvement. Regarding community members, two sets of the parents recommended me to select their children's grandmothers and one set of parents introduced me one of their Vietnamese friend living in their neighborhood. In Epstein's theory, grandmothers are considered as family members, thus in this study I addressed these

participants accordingly to their relationship with the focal Vietnamese immigrant children and families. Unfortunately, the characterization of participants as community members differs from the defined terms of “community members” in the literature review. Nevertheless, the selection of such participants based on their relational proximity with the child was a process that afforded me a closer look into their partnerships with the child’s parents and teachers in which their support might best meet the children’s and their parents’ needs in comparison with other community members at a macro level. Recruitment information was presented to three teachers, two grandmothers, and one Vietnamese friend of a Vietnamese immigrant family via the poster. A letter of consent was distributed by hand to these participants who were willing to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

It commonly recommended that case study data collection should use many different sources of evidence. In other words, the researchers are encouraged to triangulate the data by collecting information from multiple sources of data which will be used to support emerging themes (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Merriam (2009) also warned that the concept “collecting data” sometimes may be misleading. Data are not “out there to wait for the researcher to collect;” rather collecting data always involves selecting data, and the techniques used to collect such data. I used the type of data triangulation including semi-structured interviews and observations (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Specifically I compared and cross-checked the interview data collected from people with different perspectives including Vietnamese immigrant parents, teachers, and community members, and compared data collected through observations at different times and in different places.

Semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, a set of open-ended questions was predetermined (see Appendixes A, B, and C). However, either the exact wording or the order of questions was not predetermined. This allows the participants the freedom to control the pacing and subject matter of the interview. Furthermore, this also enables the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging perspectives of the interviewees, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam, 2009). In this study, a location and time for interviews were determined at the participants' convenience. The participants, regardless of their limited time availability, quickly responded to my emails or phone calls and enthusiastically set aside time for my interview. During the interview sessions with the participants, I was able to notice how fully they engaged in the data collection process. The participants communicated frankly and shared their experiences, their concerns, and their challenges. They also showed their commitment to the data gathering process by letting me know that I could contact them if I needed further information from them.

I conducted nine interviews, each of which lasted approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. This resulted in approximately ten hours of audio-taped interviews which I transcribed verbatim. As agreed by the participants, I sent them a transcript of their interview via email and asked them to check whether what was transcribed matched what they intended. The participants were asked to change or to add anything that they desired to present their experiences and perceptions as accurately as possible. After this process, I met each participant face to face to sign a data release form (see Appendix F). In addition, some Vietnamese participants preferred to conduct interviews in Vietnamese. After doing the transcription and obtaining the transcript release forms, I translated the transcripts into English. After that, I had my ESL volunteer, who

has been helping me revise my writings since I started working with my thesis proposal, assist with the revision of my translated transcripts.

Observations. The procedure of observation ranged from descriptive observations to focused observations, and then to selected observations. I assumed the role of a participant observer. I acted as an outsider initially, followed by becoming an insider over time. In descriptive observations, I gathered information in response to describing physical settings such as location, time, actor, and activity, as well as personal reflections, insights, and initial interpretations. When I became familiar with the families, I began my focused observations on the families' involvement patterns to support their children's early learning and development mainly in the home setting.

I conducted two observation sessions for each Vietnamese immigrant family, each of which lasted approximately forty-five minutes. The observations took place either at the participants' house or at a public place where I was able to observe how Vietnamese immigrant parents assist their children's schooling at home and in community settings. Using the observation strategy enabled me to examine factors that influence the involvement of Vietnamese's immigrant parents in their children's early learning and development either at home or in other settings, then figure out types of parental involvement adopted by Vietnamese immigrant parents. However, Vietnamese immigrant parents appeared to be less natural when they noticed my appearance and observation while they were playing or learning with their children. This explained why I did not obtain much authentic data based on the observations I conducted with the parent participants. As a result, I obtained only minimal authentic data based on the observations conducted with the parents and children in home settings, and this subsequently translated into research findings based almost entirely on data from the interviews.

I also designed an observational protocol to record both descriptive and reflective notes (see Appendix H).

Data Analysis Strategies for Validating Findings

Data collection and analysis must be a simultaneous process in a qualitative study (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative data analysis involves organizing the data, conducting a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2013). In a multiple case study, Merriam (2009) suggested two stages of analysis including the within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis. While the within-case analysis offers the researcher a comprehensive understanding of each case and contextual variables that may influence on the case, the cross-case analysis leads to general explanation that fits the individual cases (Yin, 2013).

In this study, after transcribing the data collected from the interviews, I first began by constructing a case study database (Yin, 2013) or a case study record (Patton, 2002) to organize all case data into comprehensive and retrievable resource packages. Then, I translated some interview transcripts conducted in Vietnamese into English, and requested my ESL volunteer to edit and validate the translated versions. I read sets of data to get a general sense of the whole and the ideas presented. At the same time, I reviewed and corrected each interview transcript. After that, I re-read and extracted significant statements and phrases pertaining to the research topic from each data transcript. Meanings were formulated from significant statements and phrases. Then the meanings were coded into themes, and these themes evolved into theme clusters, and eventually into theme categories. Specific themes were highlighted to perform a preliminary analysis. Then I wrote a detailed description of Vietnamese immigrant parents' experience and from this the picture of school, family, and community partnerships of

Vietnamese immigrant families was made clear. I processed two stages of a multiple case study analysis as suggested by Merriam (2009). The within-case analysis helped me comprehensively understand each set of parents' conceptualizations and practices of the partnerships. The cross-case analysis enabled me to weave the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families into a whole.

Research Trustworthiness

In order to worthily contribute to either practice or the theory of a field, research studies must be rigorously conducted (Merriam, 2009; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Regardless of the research design, validation in qualitative research is concerned throughout the research process with aspects of conceptualizing the study, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data, as well as presenting the findings (Merriam, 2009). Different researchers have different terms describing the qualitative validation such as: trustworthiness to demonstrate the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); validity and reliability (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009); crystalization (Richardson, 2000).

Qualitative trustworthiness is determined through the use of various strategies to examine the accuracy of the findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are ten techniques for establishing trustworthiness: prolong engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, member checks, thick description, audit, and reflexive journal. Creswell (2013) summarized eight strategies that are frequently used by qualitative researchers including prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rick and thick description, external audits. Creswell (2013) also suggested that at least two of these eight strategies should be adopted by qualitative researchers in any given study. Because

trustworthiness is a key to evaluating the quality of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I attempted to meet the criteria of trustworthiness for this study as follows:

Merriam (2009) stated that triangulation is probably the most well-known strategy to increase the trustworthiness of a study. Researchers frequently use triangulation as a means of enlarging the landscape of their inquiry, offering a deeper and a more comprehensive picture (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended that triangulation helps to improve the credibility of the findings and interpretations. Although triangulation has been effectively utilized in numerous studies there exists an argument that as the world is “far more than three sides” triangulation may not be appropriate (Richardson, 2000, p. 934). Richardson (2000) proposed another concept, crystallization, which is more congruent to postmodernism. According to Richardson (2000), crystallization enables a shift from seeing something as a fixed rigid two-dimensional object towards a concept of the crystal, which allows for “infinite variety of shape, substance, transmutations, multi-dimensionality, and angles of approach” (p. 934).

However, there is little written on the concept of crystallization in qualitative research and little research has been conducted to prove crystallization as a workable strategy (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Researchers are advised that until the concept of crystallization is further explored and articulated, it is beneficial to use the triangulation as its advantages have been established throughout the research history (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Triangulation of this study meant using multiple methods of data collection. In this regard, I used interviews and observations as multiple methods of data collection. At the same time, triangulation of using multiple source of data was used in which I could compare and cross-check data collected through observations at different times and in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives, or documents that I read.

Another strategy used in this study was member-checking which determines the accuracy of the findings through taking the preliminary analysis back to the participants to check whether my interpretation “rings true” (Merriam, 2009, p. 217). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is considered “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). To establish the credibility of this study, I sent the participants the transcripts for review and verification, with the final analysis occurring only after members had had a two-week window to consider and provide any changes to their previous statements. None of the participants responded with objections or modifications to these transcripts.

Importantly, I also received ongoing feedback and advice from my two co-supervisors regarding the process of the study, emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations. Specifically, generally once every few weeks, new drafts of my writings were sent to my co-supervisors for their feedback and advice. After my co-supervisors reviewed an early draft and provided feedback and suggestions to me, I revised my writing accordingly to their advice.

In summary, I used a number of strategies such as triangulation, member-checking, and obtaining my supervisors’ advice to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. The trustworthiness of the study is the means by which the researcher shows “integrity and competence” (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 390). Furthermore, “the standards for quality in interpretive social science are also standards for ethics” (Lincoln, 1995, p. 287).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher must anticipate any ethical issues that may arise during the qualitative research process and plan to address them (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Researchers need to protect their research participants by establishing trust with them, promoting the integrity of the

research, guarding against misconduct and any impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions, and cope with new challenging problems (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2013) also warned that ethical issues surface throughout the research process rather than only in data collection. Hence I considered the following ethical issues relevant to each step of the research process.

Prior to conducting the study: I obtained the ethical standards that are needed in professional area. After that, I submitted the study for the approval of the University of Saskatchewan Ethic Research Board.

1. Before beginning to conduct the study: I contacted the participants and informed them of general purpose of the study. Participants were advised in writing of the voluntary nature of their participation and the right of withdrawing from the study at any time. Participants were also informed that they have the right to decline to answer any question at any time during the process. Two copies of a written consent form approved by the University of Saskatchewan Ethic Research Board were signed by each participant and me. The participant and I each kept one copy. In the consent form, I asked the participants to select a pseudonym in order to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality also.

2. Collecting data: I discussed the purpose of the study and how the data would be used. I attempted to avoid leading questions, sharing personal impressions, and disclosing sensitive information.

3. Analyzing data: The final decision regarding participants' privacy rested with the participants. Hence, I assigned a pseudonym for those participants who preferred me to choose one pseudonym for them. In addition, all transcripts of interviews and observation notes were

returned to the participants to check for accuracy of transcription. A consent form of transcript release was obtained from each participant.

4. Reporting data: I referred to APA (2010) guidelines to reprint and adapt work of others, and reported honestly. Written interpretations of the data would be made available to the participants upon request.

5. Publishing data: Copies of the final report would be provided to participants and related stakeholders.

(Adapted from Creswell, 2013)

Summary of the Chapter Three

In the chapter “Research Methodology,” I have introduced myself as a social constructionist to conduct a qualitative case study of the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in Canada. A case study approach was chosen as the most appropriate approach for me to gain an understanding of how Vietnamese immigrant parents partner with the school and the community in order to support their young child’s learning and development in an early learning program. My role as an insider was permissible thanks to the similarities between Vietnamese immigrant parents’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds and mine. On the other hand, as a Vietnamese graduate student with a different immigration status, I sometimes acted as an outsider during the data collection process. The researcher’s questions were included in this chapter. In order to address the research questions, I used a variety of data collection methods. These data collection methods included interviews, and observations. The data analysis techniques were also presented in this chapter. In addition, the trustworthiness and ethical issues were also discussed. Even though the researcher utilized advice on case study methodology from numerous researchers such as Yin (2013), Creswell

(2013), Merriam (2009), and Stake (1995), readers will recognize Merriam's (2009) work as the main guide for this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in Saskatchewan. Therefore, this chapter examines how Vietnamese immigrant parents perceived school, family, and community partnerships in a Canadian context and explores ways these Vietnamese immigrant parents partnered with the teacher and community members in order to support their young children's learning and development. Apart from a brief introduction of the participants and the chapter summary, this chapter includes three main sections which present the results of data analysis for each research question.

Specifically, the first section of this chapter examines Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualization of the school, family, and community partnerships related to their children's early learning and development. The second section relates what supports and challenges Vietnamese immigrant parents identified in building and maintaining the partnerships that assist their children's early learning and development. The last section describes Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices related to the partnerships that assist their children's early learning and development. In this chapter, I also use a coding system to refer either the participants' statements quoted from interview transcripts in English or the descriptive notes obtained from the observations. For example, (T.7) refers to the quotation of the Tran parents' interview transcript on page seven. Similarly, (O.H2.1) indicates the note extracted from the Hoang family's second observation, page one.

The Participants

Vietnamese immigrant families. In this study, the three families' names are Nguyen, Tran, and Hoang (pseudonyms are used to ensure the anonymity of the participants). In the Nguyen family, the husband was born and grew up in Canada and his wife, whom he had met and married in Vietnam came to Canada as a permanent resident under the family sponsorship category. The Nguyen family has a son born in Canada. The Nguyen son is four years old. This family also has an extended family that has been supporting them by taking care of their son since he was born. This extended family includes grandparents and two uncles with their own families.

The Tran and the Hoang families came to Canada on student and visitor visa. In these two families, both husbands came to Canada to study for graduate degrees and their wives came later as visitors to join them. The Tran family has recently been approved to become Canadian citizens and both their children were born in Canada. Their first daughter is four years old and the second daughter is five months old. The Hoang family immigrated to Canada almost a year prior to interviews. The Hoang daughter was born and has been brought up in Vietnam up to the age of four before they came to Canada.

Each family and each parent of the family has been addressed in a flexible manner. For example, I may use "the Tran parents" instead of "the Tran family" or "the Tran mother," "the Tran father," and "the Tran son" in order to specify an individual's responses during the interviews.

Teachers. The teacher who instructed each child in an early learning program was chosen as the teacher participants for this study. The three teachers had been working in an early learning program for a number of years. Specifically, the Nguyen family's teacher, who will be addressed as Jenifer, had been working in her daycare center position for four years. The Tran

family's teacher whose pseudonym is Ruvy had been working in her daycare center position for six years and the Hoang family's teacher, called Stella in this study, had eighteen years of both international and Canadian working experience in an early learning program.

Other participants. In addition to the teachers, I also requested each set of Vietnamese immigrant parents to recommend another adult to me; someone who had the closest relationship or the most frequent interactions with their child. The Nguyen family had an extended family who had been supporting them by taking care of their child since the child was born. They suggested that I should select the child's grandmother to be interviewed as the community member for their family. The Nguyen family's grandmother had resided in Canada for almost thirty years. She preferred to be addressed as "Kim" in this study. The other two families, the Tran and the Hoang families, did not have extended families residing in Canada. However, the Tran family had sponsored the mother on the wife's side to come to Canada since the wife gave birth to their second child. The Tran family then also recommended their children's grandmother to participate in my study. The grandmother of the Tran family had previously stayed in Canada for a couple of years when the Tran family had their first child. This is the second time the grandmother had returned back to Canada and she planned to stay in Saskatchewan for two years more. I selected the name "Le" as a pseudonym for the Tran child's grandmother. The Hoang family introduced me to a Vietnamese friend who lived in the same building and supported them by looking after their child quite often in the late afternoons when the wife had to go to work and the husband had to go to the lab. A pseudonym "Van" was assigned for the Hoang family's community member.

Table 4.1

Representation of Families, Teachers, and Other Participants by Names

Families	The Nguyen family	The Tran family	The Hoang family
Teachers	Jenifer	Ruvy	Stella
Other participants	Kim (Grandmother)	Le (Grandmother)	Van (Friend)

Vietnamese Immigrant Parents' Conceptualizations of the Partnerships in an Early Learning Program

Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations of the school, family, and community partnerships that support their children's early learning and development are presented in the framework of four major themes. These themes emerged based on the frequency of responses and the imputations of importance generated by any one or more participants, or an idea, experience or concept reflected by two or more participants. Figure 4.1 illustrates the four themes as follow:

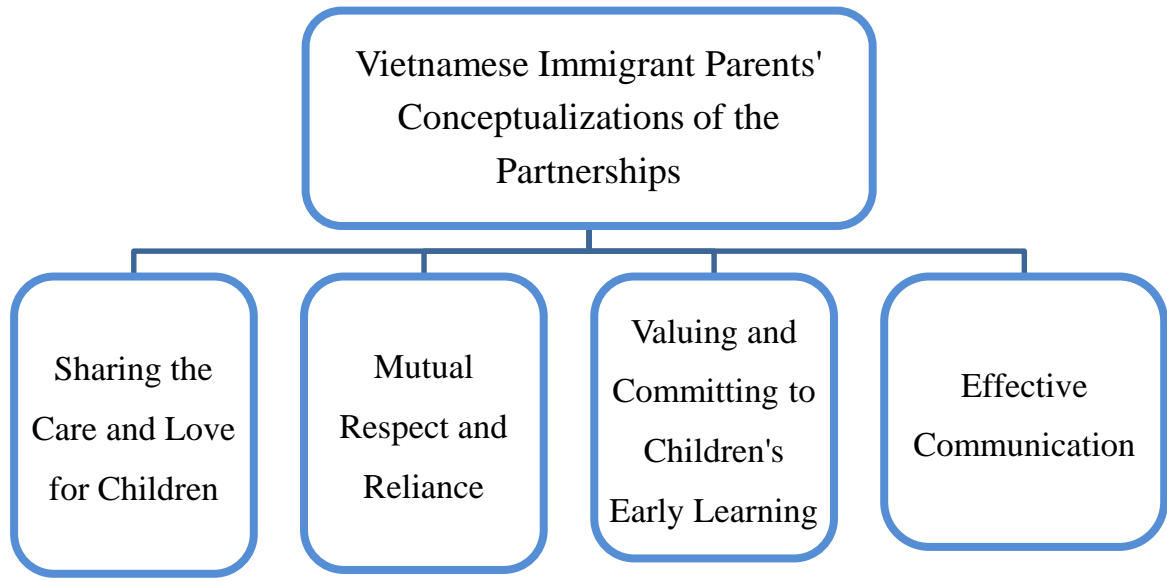


Figure 4.1: Vietnamese Immigrant Parents' Conceptualizations of the Partnerships

Partnerships as sharing the care and love for children. Epstein (1997) stated that the way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's family. In other words, Epstein (1997) meant that "educators are likely to recognize both parents and community members as partners with the school in the child's education and development when they view students as children" (p. 2). However, Vietnamese immigrant parents revealed an opposite direction regarding their conceptualizations of the partnerships with their children's teacher and other adults selected in this study that demonstrated the sharing of the care and love for children. Through their eyes, the teacher's care about the children depends much on the parents' care for them. The Tran mother found that when she dropped off her daughter and then left without talking to the teacher, she felt that the teacher perceived that Tran mother was not concerned about her child. As a result, the teacher did not communicate with the Tran mother to update about her daughter's day in the daycare centre. The Tran mother said:

The teacher will realize whether parents pay less or more attention to their child. If parents drop off their child, and then leave without communicating with the teachers

about the child, the teachers know that. I used to pay less attention to my daughter. I didn't ask anything about my daughter so the teacher didn't tell me anything about her...However when I frequently asked the teachers and the manager about how my daughter was eating and wondered why she was not gaining weight, the teachers and the manager were very helpful. They showed me the menu and asked for my suggestions. I want to say that if parents show concern about their child the teachers will respond to that concern. (T.14)

At the same time, the Tran mother admitted that the teachers' care about the child and their interest in partnering with the parents are much improved when she shows her increasing consideration of the child's wellness at school. In the Tran's mother opinion, both parents and teachers should share the care and love for children; however she warned that the apparent level of parents' caring about their children may influence the teacher's level of caring for them.

The Hoang parents showed me how very happy they were to see their daughter being taken such a good care of by the teachers. They told me that their daughter was not used to going upstairs and downstairs, so the teachers carried her on the stairs for the first few days at the school. Another moving memory of the Hoang parents was when their daughter had only a pair of outdoor shoes and her teachers nicely explained to them the rule of wearing indoor shoes inside the school after providing their daughter with a suitable pair of indoor shoes. "The teachers here are very kind. I recognize their kindness through their words, their actions, and my daughter's good development" (H.13), said the Hoang father. He added "I was impressed by a short-haired teacher whose name I didn't know. When my daughter said good bye to her for the Christmas holiday this teacher hugged and kissed her as if she were her granddaughter. This teacher was quite old and she loved my daughter so much that I felt moved" (H.19).

The Hoang father shared a common comment on Van's care for his daughter when he sent his daughter to her house. He stated "when I send my daughter to Van's apartment I believe that she will treat my daughter as well as her own daughters. She loves children. She feeds my daughter whatever she feeds her daughters and she plays with my daughter too" (H.11). From the stance point of an immigrant parent, I was able to understand how emotional the Hoang parents could be when they saw their daughter being loved and cared for by people who surrounded her. All Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study, without any exception, considered a sharing of love and care for their children with the teachers and other adults surrounded their children as a core criterion of the effective partnerships that contribute to their child's successful early learning and development.

Partnerships as mutual respect and reliance. As indicated in Chapter Two concerning Asian immigrant parents' perspectives of school, family, and community partnerships, Vietnamese immigrant parents are deeply influenced by the Confucianism theory which demands respect for the older people and the teacher. Recalling their time at school when they were small, most parents were impressed with the elders' and the teacher's superior knowledge of their educational needs.

The Tran mother stated "Like other Vietnamese families, my family always values learning so the teachers always have a special position in our thinking. When I went to school in Vietnam I was always reminded to show my best respect to the teachers before starting learning. So the school and the teachers are always greatly respected" (T.2). The Tran father continued "Like in other Vietnamese people's thinking, I also think that Vietnamese teachers obtain a special position in the society. I want to add that in Vietnam what the teacher said is always right" (T.2). The Hoang father shared a common perspective saying that "in my village, people

highly value education and greatly respect the teachers as they consider being a teacher is a very prestigious job. In addition, my family has a long tradition of working in the educational field, so education is very important in my family. And I was taught to obey and follow all of what the teacher said because I was taught that teachers are always right and their words are always considered as the truth due to the influence of Confucianism” (H.2).

Based on the cultural value of respecting the teacher, these Vietnamese immigrant parents showed their great appreciation and trust when communicating with their children’s teacher and grandmother, and their friend in order to build up and maintain effective partnerships with the school and the community. The Hoang father said “First, in order to partner effectively, everyone involved has to trust each other” (H.11). He expanded “I would send my daughter to a school only when I felt the school was reputable. The reliance on the school is very important. When I believe that my daughter is being well-fed and well-treated, I find it ok” (H.12). He concluded that parents should be able to rely on the school and the teacher in order to partner effectively. Similarly, since he strongly believed that his daughter will be well-treated by Van, his family’s friend, he has been motivated to reach out for Van’s support.

When conducting interviews with the teachers, I obtained some positive comments relating to Vietnamese immigrant parents’ appreciation of the teacher. The Nguyen child’s teacher, Jenifer, stated that from her experience, immigrant parents do have a high respect for the teacher and they value the role that the teacher plays in their children’s life. She clarified “maybe unlike someone who has lived in Canada for their whole life I think they put a little less pressure on teachers, immigrant families, they...they seem to value your opinion and want your opinion, and they don’t take it out on offensive things” (J.7). Jenifer provided me an example “I had one little girl and it was just a little thing like I did her hair at the daycare, I did braid in her hair and

when the mom came and picked her up she told her child to come and tell me ‘thank you’ if she hadn’t said it yet” (J.9). Jenifer meant with such a little action like that, immigrant families showed that they are a lot more appreciative and did really appreciate the teacher’s caring about their child during the day. This helps Jenifer to be willing to share her opinions and give advice to immigrant parents whenever they communicated with her.

Likewise, the Hoang family’s teacher, Stella, realized that immigrant parents consider the respect for the teacher as a factor that contributes to effective partnerships. Stella commented:

Ah, newcomers, especially I can tell more about Vietnamese, and Chinese parents. They are full of respect for people. You know, if they are treating us like babysitters, it can’t be a success... I can tell of the example of two Vietnamese girls, you know, they do show respect for teachers. Kids, they know immediately and are ready to follow parents’ steps. (S.3)

Stella further explained that if parents show their respect for the children’s teachers, the children immediately know about this and they respect and trust the teacher, and are ready to follow the teacher’s rules.

Partnerships as valuing and committing to children’s early learning. All Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study emphasized the necessity of their children’s early learning before compulsory school age. In addition, these parents acknowledged the benefits of their children’s early learning in different settings rather than only in the home setting. As a result, all these Vietnamese immigrant parents showed their high value for and strong commitment to their children’s early learning. However, they also realized that as their children’s early learning should occur in different settings parents alone are not able to support their children’s early learning. Therefore, the school, family, and community partnerships in which the children’s early

learning is highly valued, and all three partners who show their commitment to support the children's early learning, are felt to be essential to these Vietnamese immigrant parents.

To illustrate this idea of Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations of the school, family, and community partnerships, subthemes were developed including the child's transition at ease, the child's English learning and integration into Canadian culture, the child's learning about Vietnamese language and culture, and the child's learning about knowledge and skills, that demonstrated Vietnamese immigrant parents' expectations for their child's early learning and development. In my belief, by presenting their expectations, the parents sent to the teacher and other adults closely related with their children a message about the significant benefits of children's early learning for their holistic development and pressing needs for the three partners' cooperation towards achievement of children's success in their later time.

Children's transition at ease. In the Vietnamese immigrant parents' opinions, the partnerships among parents, the teacher, and community members contributed much to their children's social development and wellness. Specifically, the Tran parents spoke a great deal about their child's adaptation to the school environment when they started to put her in the daycare centre. As busy parents, they had to first send their daughter to the daycare centre when she was fifteen months old. In the beginning, the Tran parents had difficulties in training their daughter to follow the daycare centre's schedule due to conflicts between the child's schedule at home and her new schedule at the daycare centre. They sensed the teachers' unhappiness about the fact that their daughter did not sleep enough and she seemed to be unhappy and refused to eat during the daycare time. However, because these parents were first time parents they did not know how to help their daughter. They looked for the teachers' support. The Tran mother recalled:

Our daughter went to the daycare centre when she was fifteen months old. Every morning I had to write a note about what time she went to bed the night before, what time she woke up in the morning, what was her last meal, and whether she was tired on previous day or not. I had to provide all such kinds of information so they could follow up to help my daughter adapt to the daycare centre's schedule. In the beginning, I had no experience, so I let my daughter sleep rather freely without any fixed schedule. Her teachers advised me to train my daughter to go to bed at a regularly fixed time so that it would be easier for her to have a deep sleep.... The teachers advised us to wake her up early at about 7 a.m no matter how late she went to bed. In the teachers' opinion, waking my daughter up early would definitely help her go to bed early. (T.6)

She continued "after a period of time, when our daughter could follow the daycare centre's schedule, she felt much comfortable and grew better" (T.12). The Tran parents acknowledged that the teachers contributed a lot to their daughter's increasing comfort and better growth throughout the time she was staying in the daycare centre as the teachers taught their daughter most of the routine and trained her to follow it. However, to my observation, despite their experience, the teachers would not be successful in supporting the child without the parents' cooperation. Thanks to the information about the child's schedule at home provided by the parents, the teachers could better interpret the child's behaviour, then together with the parents figured out the ways to help the child adjust to a new environment.

The loose bond between grandchildren and grandparents has always been a concern for some Vietnamese immigrant families due to geographical distance between Vietnam and Canada. Le, the Tran child's grandmother, told me that she was rather worried about whether her granddaughter would welcome her to the family when she took the second trip back to Canada.

Le was afraid that her granddaughter and she might not understand each other due to language barriers and her granddaughter's unfamiliarity of having a grandmother there. Nevertheless, after a short time the child became very close with her grandmother. Le explained to me that her frequent interactions and communication with the granddaughter resulted in this close relationship. Le added that she had utilized every minute that her granddaughter was available out of her school time to talk to her, read her Vietnamese stories and poems, and play some Vietnamese folk games with her.

The Tran parents stated that when the grandmother travelled to stay in Canada with their family their daughter indeed had a "real" grandmother who lived with her. These parents believed that experiences with her grandmother gave their daughter the reality of a grandmother-granddaughter relationship that she would never forget.

Similarly, the Nguyen parents admitted that their son enjoyed himself more in the time with his grandparents than with his parents because the grandparents were so playful and friendly towards him. The Nguyen parents could not hide their excitement when describing how their son's grandparents fell down on the floor and pretended to be a horse for their son to climb on. The Nguyen mother said that "sometimes I feel like he enjoyed himself more in the time with his grandparents than with us. They're more ready to play" (N.17).

Kim, the Nguyen child's grandmother, said whenever her grandson visited her she always wanted to make him feel being loved. Kim wanted to make her grandson understand that his grandparents' house can be the hiding place he reaches for when his parents are strict with him. By saying this, Kim did not mean she would spoil her grandson so much that she might destroy his parents' orders. She told her son and daughter-in-law that she would allow their son to do whatever is not harmful to him. For example, Kim told me about the camping trip that she went

on with her grandson and his parents in Banff last summer. When they made a campfire, her grandson wanted to create sparks by tapping two logs against each other. However, his dad did not allow him to do this because he was afraid the sparks might shoot out. Kim told her son to let her grandson try as she was holding him in her arms and she would move him over if she found it too dangerous. In her opinion, this was not harmful to him but made him happy, and she loved to please him.

In short, the partnerships among parents, teachers, and other adults as selected in this study appeared to be beneficial for supporting the child to transit into a new environment such as a daycare setting and a community setting. During the interview, I was told about numerous challenges that all the parents faced when they first introduced their child and themselves to different settings apart from their home setting. However, I recognized that the parents attempted to do their best to cooperate with the teachers, the grandmothers, and their friend to afford the child's smooth transition into not only their new environments at that time but also to prepare for the child's transition into Grade One in the future.

Children's English learning and integration into Canadian culture. Being immigrants in Canada from a non-native English speaking country like Vietnam, most Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study appeared to be less confident about their English ability. Accordingly, they placed an emphasis on their children's learning English. In their opinion, sending their children to a Canadian school as early as possible will give the children a good command of English that will enable them to be ready for their transition into Grade One. The Tran mother stated "Especially for immigrant children, they should learn English at school because they mainly speak Vietnamese at home. I think if parents don't let children attend nursery or preschool they will not have enough English to be able to learn in Grade One"

(T.3). The Hoang mother stated “I think she should go to school to learn English in order to be well-prepared for her Elementary level, specifically Grade One” (H.5). She also told me about her concern that “sometimes when my daughter plays with her friends she cannot express what she wants in English. She feels uncomfortable” (H.6). Thus, she said she wanted her daughter to be able to communicate, understand, and express her thoughts in English.

Another concern about the child’s capability to integrate into the host country’s culture appeared common among these Vietnamese immigrant parents. This is possibly because Vietnamese immigrant parents suffered from the lack of knowledge of and understanding about the host country’s social norms and customs. For example, the Hoang mother did not know that children should prepare some greeting cards and sweet treats for their classmates on Valentine’s Day, so she did not prepare any for her daughter. Although she said that her daughter might have another chance on Valentine’s Day next year I could feel her disappointment in her voice. This mother also did not understand why children should wear green on Saint Patrick’s Day or wear “mix and match” on another special day at school. In another situation, the Tran parents felt sorry for not knowing some English songs and stories that their daughter learned from the daycare centre. In addition, they did not know that they should buy their daughter a special costume and take her for “Trick or Treat” on Halloween Day. Due to this culture barrier, all these Vietnamese immigrant parents felt worried about how they could give their children some Canadian cultural background to facilitate their adaptation to the host country. There was no other way than to seek support from the teachers and other local people.

The Hoang father expected the partnerships between the school and the community would provide his daughter with chances to explore Canadian cultural customs and lifestyles. He stated:

I personally think it may be better if some community members, especially old people would volunteer to take children to their home for story time or a baking activity, so the children, especially immigrant children, may understand lifestyles, culture, and social norms better. Once a week some elderly community members could take turns in bringing the children home, reading them a story, and showing them something of a real Canadian life. (H.8)

I believed this was not his curiosity, but rather than that, it was his burning desire for not only his daughter's but also for his better understanding of the host country's culture. In Vietnamese immigrant parents' belief, better understanding about the host country's culture would facilitate their better settlement in a new living environment.

The Hoang father added "I wish that retired people could cooperate with the school to invite the children to their house once a month so the children can better understand Canadian culture. In the future, these children will become Canadian citizens. Instead of actually living in a Canadian family their direct observation when visiting some Canadian families may be beneficial for their adaptation and their later development" (H.9).

The Hoang parents also expected that sending their daughter to the school would help her to learn about Canadian culture because their daughter would have the chance to communicate with local teachers and classmates and join in some activities reflecting Canadian culture in the classroom. Similarly, the Tran parents thought that if their immigrant daughter started school early she could integrate better into a new culture. They explained it this way "because when the child goes to school she can learn a lot of things from her teachers and friends. Parents cannot teach them as much as the teachers do" (T.3). To illustrate this, both the Hoang and the Tran parents coincidentally offered me the same example that people in Western countries,

specifically Canadian people, say “thank you” and “sorry” more frequently. This reflected the Canadian culture of being very polite in daily communication. Thus, in their opinion, not only their children but they also should learn to behave politely like Canadian people. Both families confirmed that children learned about this kind of polite behavior at school setting. At the same time, the Tran parents took their daughter to the library every Saturday morning to help her widen her knowledge of Canadian culture. The Tran mother said “I think she may learn some new songs and stories. She may learn something about the local culture and so may we. We don’t know some stories and songs which are popular in the local community, and we may learn about them when we go to the library” (T.11).

Moving to the next subsection on language learning, the tension that Vietnamese immigrant parents experienced in this area appeared strongly in the data. On the one side, they wished their children to be able to obtain a good command of English and have more opportunities to explore about Canadian culture for their children’s better adaptation and transition into their next educational levels. On the other side, they perceived that their children are still Vietnamese no matter where they were born, are presently being brought up, and perhaps will permanently stay in Canada. Therefore, the parents have to figure out how to support their children in maintaining the Vietnamese and some typical Vietnamese traditions. The children’s ability in Vietnamese and their understanding of Vietnamese culture therefore appeared to be another significant expectation. Many Vietnamese immigrant parent participants shared the same point of view in that they were able to rely on the partnerships with their children’s grandmothers and their Vietnamese friend to improve their child’s Vietnamese as well as their child’s understandings about Vietnamese culture.

Children's learning about Vietnamese and Vietnamese culture. Most parents in the study were worried about their children's loss of their Vietnamese mother tongue when they sent their children to a local daycare centre to learn English and adapt to Canadian culture. Because of this, they sought the support for their children to learn about Vietnamese language and culture from their children's grandmothers and their Vietnamese friend.

The Hoang father said "I remember when I first arrived here my friend told me that my daughter will soon forget Vietnamese, I felt worried about that" (H.10). The Hoang father continued "I think in the next few months when my daughter's English skills have improved she will always speak English with her friends, so she will forget her Vietnamese" (H.10). He explained that despite his reluctance to send his daughter to his Vietnamese friend's house quite often, he still had no other option because his daughter still needed to play with her friends who can communicate in Vietnamese. In order to maintain his daughter's command of Vietnamese, communicating with Vietnamese immigrants and their children must be considered as one feasible solution in his opinion as the Hoang family does not have any relatives in Canada.

Likewise, the Nguyen father acknowledged the benefits of teaching his son both languages, English and Vietnamese, especially when his son is young. The Nguyen father admitted that his son mostly learns about the Vietnamese language and culture from his wife and his parents. Kim shared a common viewpoint that "they [her son and grandson] were born here. However, they are all still Vietnamese. I want to keep the Vietnamese language alive for them. I want to maintain anything in Vietnamese culture which doesn't bother my children and my grandchildren" (K.12). During the interview, Kim appeared to be an open-minded grandmother who wanted to avoid using some Vietnamese customs that appear to be strange to Canadian in her opinion such as asking her children and grandchildren to cross their arms and bow down

when greeting their elders. Nevertheless, she still wanted to maintain some other Vietnamese customs such as giving lucky money and doing the worship on the Lunar New Year Festival; and especially she wanted to help her children and grandchildren to be able to speak and understand Vietnamese.

The Tran family did not appear to be an exception in the desire to communicate language and culture to their children. Despite the Tran parents' attempt to speak Vietnamese with their daughter at home, they have not succeeded in encouraging their daughter to communicate in Vietnamese. Their daughter prefers to speak English to them because she knows that her parents can understand and speak to her in English. Therefore, the Tran parents believed that when Le, the grandmother, comes to stay with them their daughter will be able to improve her Vietnamese and widen her knowledge of Vietnamese culture at the same time. Coincidentally, Le told me that before travelling to Canada, she was assigned the most important responsibility of helping the granddaughter learn Vietnamese by all family members of both sides in Vietnam.

Children's early learning of basic knowledge and skills. All Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study held considerable expectations for their children's early learning and development. In the beginning of the interview, the participants seemed to speak less about their expectations about their children's early learning and development. A couple of parents said they allow their children to develop naturally and comfortably. In other words, they do not intend to force their child to learn anything seriously, especially academic subjects such as Mathematics, Reading, and Writing, during the child's early years.

First, some basic skills such as holding a fork or a knife properly, wearing clothes, and using scissors...etc. were listed by the parents. In their opinion, when their children are well-equipped with these basic skills they will be able to become independent. The Hoang mother

realized that her daughter had learned these basic skills better at school rather than at home. For example, she stated “At school, she learns about drawing and cutting papers... It is very good when the teacher lets her use scissors by herself whereas her mom does not allow her at home” (H.6).

In addition, the Hoang mother also stressed her child’s safe attendance in different settings. The Hoang mother said that safety is the most important attribute but she identified that her daughter’s safety was ensured when her daughter played with her Vietnamese friends. The mother also added that when her daughter played with children from other communities, she sometimes suffered from negative incidents due to different languages and cultures. Moreover, in the mother’s opinion, it was not easy for the parents alone to teach children about safety skills. When children have opportunities to be part of other settings such as school and community contexts, parents expected the teacher and other adults to help the children learn about safety skills.

Social skills such as communicating with other adults and friends, sharing toys with friends, taking turns, and learning how to react when losing and winning in a game appeared to be significant for the child’s personality development in most Vietnamese immigrant parents’ opinions. The Nguyen parents affirmed that they were the ones who were the most responsible for teaching their child these social skills. On the other hand, the Hoang and the Tran parents relied on the teacher’s support. Despite the acknowledgement of their parental roles, the Hoang and the Tran parents believed if their children are sent to school they will be systematically taught these skills by their teachers because the teachers are professionally trained to do so. When expressing their expectation for children’s early learning about “academic” subjects such as Mathematics, Reading, Writing, and Sciences, the Nguyen parents placed an emphasis on

their own responsibility. However, the Hoang and the Tran parents tended to balance their involvement and the teacher's involvement related to their children's early learning.

Partnerships as effective communication. The desire for frequent, open, and honest communication among three partners including parents, the teacher, and community members was the predominant theme all participants expressed when defining effective school, family, and community partnerships. Specifically, the Hoang parents stated "the communication between the school and the family should go smoothly. For example, the teacher keeps informing us what our daughter learnt, what food she ate, and what craft she might bring home, ..." (H.7). The Hoang father related his personal story that her daughter's teacher once told him that his daughter is not good at using scissors. The teacher asked him to let his daughter practice using scissors more at home. He was so surprised to receive that feedback because he had never previously received such feedback from the teacher. In his experience, the teacher had supported his daughter bringing home what she made at school whereas he was interested in knowing at what level his daughter is ranked and at what level she is good at each skill or subject.

The Hoang father added one more story related to how his daughter used to be improperly prepared for some special days such as Valentine's Day and Halloween because her parents were not updated about the school's activities on these days. He explained this by saying that:

There were some kinds of special days when the teacher didn't inform us about the details. The teacher might have announced about these days somewhere in the school.

However, when I drop my daughter off I always have to hurry up because I am afraid of being ticketed for parking over the limited time. The teacher didn't send us paper

bulletins stating what we should prepare for our child on those days in detail. Perhaps, the

teacher thought we already knew, but for immigrant parents like us, we didn't know at all. (H.7)

The Tran parents suggested that the effectiveness of partnerships can be assessed based on the frequency of interaction among the three partners. In their opinion, the parents, the teacher, and community members have to communicate with each other more often to be updated about the child. Likewise, the Nguyen parents recommended that effective partnerships just like three cycles that need to be connected. The Nguyen father expanded:

That's quite clear, if something's wrong with the children, for example, they have a bad day or they didn't do homework or anything, the teacher needs to tell the parents what's going on and the parents need to go home and make sure the children do their part; and as for the community, if the children have bad manners the community members should know and inform the parents. (N.8)

Frequent communication to fully update parents about their children's day and the school activities appears to be a high priority for all the Vietnamese immigrant parents. Meanwhile, all teachers in this study placed an emphasis on open and honest communication from parents. Jenifer agreed that communication is effective because the teacher then knows exactly what parents expect and are looking for. She provided an example that demonstrates effective communication between parents and the teacher by narrating that:

Sometimes parents visit me and say that "we do not want my child to participate in an activity because of cultural reasons" or "my son cannot eat certain things. This is not because he is allergic but because of different cultures or beliefs" (J.5).

Jenifer recommended:

I would say having open communication and being honest would be a very essential part of having effective partnerships. If your child's having trouble at home, you should say "hey, my child's in trouble at home" or if he's having some trouble in something in the daycare centre, I may say "hey, we're having trouble with this. Is there anything you've done at home that might help us here?" or "Is there any advice that you can give us?" It is a lot easier to communicate when you can be honest and open about things. (J.9)

Stella shared the common opinion that everything about the child should be open between parents and the teachers. In her opinion, the more information parents provide the teacher about their children the better the teacher can support them. She made a comment that "it is typical for a lot of immigrants, including Vietnamese immigrant parents to try to present the best and hide the worst. They do not realize whether this cannot help the child." Stella concluded that the teacher needs to be told the truth about the child's situation. This was not because the teacher is curious. In her opinion, telling the teacher the truth would help the child's transition from home to school occur more easily.

Summary of Vietnamese Immigrant Parents' Conceptualizations of the Partnerships. In this section, I have presented four major themes that demonstrated how Vietnamese immigrant parents participating in the study conceptualized school, family, and community partnerships that support their children's early learning and development in different settings. These four themes were extracted and developed based on the Vietnamese immigrant parents' most important partnership experiences. In order to ensure the credibility of these selected themes, I cross-checked with interview data collected from the teachers and other participants selected in the study. In these parents' opinions, a core element of the partnerships is that all three partners should share their love and care for the child. As discussed in Chapter

Two, Vietnamese immigrant parents highly respect the elders and the teacher as well as value education due to the influence of the Confucianism. Thus, mutual respect and reliance in the partnerships were considered as essential in these parents' mindset. At the same time, these Vietnamese immigrant parents presented their recognition of the significance of children's early learning. Accordingly, Vietnamese immigrant parents showed their strong commitment to their children's early learning and desire to cooperate with the teacher and community members to assist their children's early learning. Finally, a predominant theme of effective communication was shown to reflect a great demand for updating and being updated about the child's situation in different settings, emphasizing good communication among all partners. Consistent with the objective of the study, the next section of this chapter presents the supports and challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents when working with the teachers and other adults to enhance the partnerships that contribute to their children's early learning and development.

Supports for Vietnamese Immigrant Parents in the Partnerships

In this section, I will present the research findings of the supports that Vietnamese immigrant parents received from their children's teacher, their children's grandmothers, and their Vietnamese friend in order to directly and indirectly support their children's early learning and development. Three subthemes emerged are *improving parent knowledge and skills*, *providing settlement information and service*, and *maintaining Vietnamese language and culture*.

Improving parenting knowledge and skills. As three couples of Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study were first-time parents of the focal child of this study, their demands for acquiring parenting knowledge and skills appeared particularly important to them. They all shared various stories and experiences in which they had received the support for improving their parenting knowledge and skills, ranging from advice on selecting and preparing the food for the

child to advice on dealing with the child's behavior from their children's teacher and grandmothers as well as from their friend.

Kim told me that as her daughter-in-law newly immigrated to Canada she needed to instruct her more about how to select and prepare food for her son. She stated:

For example, in Vietnam, young children are fed with porridge. However I advised my daughter-in-law not to feed her son with that kind of food so often. Instead I wanted to alternate it with some different vegetables. As a grandmother I love my grandson very much but I can't order my daughter-in-law to do what I suggest because she is his mom who is the closest to him. My daughter-in-law has the absolute right of selecting what is the best for her son. (K.11)

Likewise, the Nguyen parents not only received the support from their child's grandmother but also received advice from their son's teacher to help their son learn about how to be a good winner and loser in a game. The Nguyen mother stated that:

I did bring up the fact that my son sometimes easily gets mad when he loses his game. Then the teacher said "maybe because he is the only child, you, both parents, should play games together with him and see how he reacts and we can go from there. That was her suggestion. That is very good." (N.11)

Jenifer told me she had talked with the Nguyen mother about this situation and indicated that:

We have talked to them about different communication things, I mean being a single child, you do not get that sharing or playing with someone else at home unless the parents step in and role model that with him. I think my co-worker and I mentioned like just

playing games with him, teaching him to take turn, and explaining to him that he may always want to win but sometimes someone may not win. (J.8)

As mentioned in the first section, the Tran parents were advised by their daughter's teacher to re-schedule their daughter's routine in order to make her go to bed earlier and have enough sleep so that their daughter felt more comfortable and adapted better to the daycare centre's schedule. The Tran mother recalled "at the beginning, I did not know, so I let my daughter sleep rather freely without any fixed schedule. Her teachers advised me to train my daughter to go to bed at a regularly fixed time so that it would be easier for her to have a deep sleep" (T.6). She continued "the teachers advised us to wake her up early at about 7 a.m no matter how late she went to bed. In the teacher's opinion, waking my daughter up early would definitely help her go to bed earlier" (T.6).

The Tran parents also relayed another experience they had. When they took their daughter to the daycare centre, the mother and the grandmother wanted to stay there a little longer to see how their daughter adapted. However the teachers advised them not to stay because this would make it more difficult for them to deal with the child and make the child more difficult to transfer into the daycare setting. Similarly, Ruvy recalled her experience with the Tran parents in the first days when she received the child to the baby room. Ruvy said:

Like I said when they first started realizing that she [their daughter] is still really in the baby room they were apprehensive about leaving her. And I am pretty sure they never came out.... I am pretty sure like her grandma, she stayed here so much and we kind of figured that out. I remembered suggesting to mom and dad "You know, maybe have grandma go away for an hour, go for a coffee, and give the child time to bond with the teachers in the centre, that is important too." (R.5)

Ruvy commented on the Tran parents' feeling when they first took their daughter to the daycare centre that "I can see when they were leaving their child with people that may not speak the child's language they can feel a little scary" (R.4). After a period of time, the teacher could see the growth and increasingly comfortable level of the child as well as that of the Tran parents. She said:

I mean being able to see that growth on her [the child] has been really nice. Ah, and I think I see the growth of her mom and dad a little too, like they are not apprehensive, worried, and scared parents when they left her for those first few days in the baby room. Now they leave and she says "goodbye and see you later" and she is good. She does not have the anxiety of separating from her mom and dad anymore. (R.14)

In short, for these Vietnamese immigrant parents who all were first time parents, the teacher's and other adults' advice on their parenting skills appear to be very helpful for nurturing and educating their child. As reported in the first section of this chapter, Vietnamese immigrant parents do respect the teachers and elders very much. So, they are ready to receive the teachers and elders' suggestions or advice and greatly appreciate their support. It is significant for these Vietnamese immigrant parents to build up and maintain effective partnerships with their children's teachers and grandmothers as well as their friend in order to better assist their children.

Providing settlement information and service. When Vietnamese immigrant parents newly immigrated to Canada they struggled with numerous difficulties, because of the lack of essential information about resources and services for their settlement. As the Hoang family child's friend, Van shared all the information about places to go shopping and buying Vietnamese foods, places to buy a car and obtain car insurance, or places to change car oil. In

addition, whereas daycare spots for the child are easily available in Vietnam, as parents in Canada, you normally have to put your child's name on the waiting list for at least one year. Therefore, making an application for their child's spot in a Canadian daycare centre seemed to be frustrating for Vietnamese immigrant parents. With the experience of bringing up two children in Canada, Van also gave the Hoang parents advice on high quality daycare centres and procedures for registration.

Moreover, Van sometimes provided care for the Hoang family's daughter when the Hoang parents were busy with their working schedule or in some special situations when they could not take their daughter out with them. Van stated:

Whenever her parents [the Hoang parents] were busy they brought their daughter to my apartment to play with my children. When she stayed with me and my children, I often taught her how to play some games. I asked what she would like to play and took out some games for her such as balls, puzzles, stuffed toys, and reading books. (V.6)

Likewise, Kim sometimes supported the Nguyen parents in transporting their son to and from the daycare centre. She said she like dropping off and picking up her grandson because she sometimes had a chance to observe her grandson playing and interacting with other children in his classroom. In addition, Kim took care of the Nguyen family's son when the child was brought to her house. Kim acknowledged that although her grandson stayed in her house, she maintained most rules that his parents wanted him to follow such as drinking milk at a specific time before going to bed and brushing his teeth after drinking milk.

Vietnamese immigrant parents received this kind of support mainly from their children's grandmothers or their friends because they had little communication with the teachers about their personal life, except for matters relating to their child. However, most teachers confirmed that

these immigrant parents did look for support from the daycare centre's manager. Ruvy remembered that the Tran parents used to tell the daycare manager about problems with getting used to the culture and the language. The Tran parents wanted to know whether there was any service or resource to help them overcome those struggles. According to Ruvy, the daycare manager attempted to put the Tran parents in contact with the right person to make such kind of resources available. Similarly, Jenifer also said that her daycare manager would always be able to help immigrant parents whenever they needed resources.

Maintaining Vietnamese language and culture. As stated in the first section, Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study showed their great concern about the possibility of their children losing their knowledge of the Vietnamese language and being unfamiliar with some Vietnamese typical customs when they grew up. Therefore, on one side, these Vietnamese parents attempted to help their children learn about Vietnamese and Vietnamese culture. On the other side, they looked forward to receiving the support from their children's grandmothers and their Vietnamese friend. Indeed, all the grandmothers and the friend have the desire for helping the children learn Vietnamese and introducing them to some Vietnamese traditional customs. However, the level of their desire and expectation for the children in these areas are not the same. During the interview, it was apparent that the Tran child's grandmother expected to support the Tran parents in helping their daughter learn Vietnamese and understand some Vietnamese traditional customs. Le stated that:

Before I arrived here [in Canada] all my family members in Vietnam expected me to teach my granddaughter some Vietnamese. As my granddaughter is a Vietnamese girl, I do not want her to lose her mother tongue. Whenever my granddaughter comes home from school I tell her to speak Vietnamese to me otherwise I cannot understand her. In

the beginning, she spoke less because she still felt shy, but later, perhaps because her Vietnamese was nurtured when she was small and now she has more opportunities to communicate in Vietnamese with me, her Vietnamese has improved very quickly. I feel so happy. (L.1)

In Le's opinion, she made use of her granddaughter's time availability at home to teach her granddaughter to learn Vietnamese and Vietnamese culture because she acknowledged the time that she stays with her granddaughter is very valuable for both of them. She shared one story related to her granddaughter's learning about Vietnamese that she read her granddaughter a rhyme in Vietnamese like "Nhong, nhong, nhong, ngựa ông đã về. Cắt cỏ bỏ đê cho ngựa ông ăn" (Neigh, neigh, neigh, my horse has come home. Let's cut some grass to feed him) before they went to bed. In the following morning, when her father took her to the daycare centre she recited to her father that rhyme.

Le felt so happy that her granddaughter was interested in reading that rhyme. She said her granddaughter's interest in learning Vietnamese motivates her to frequently communicate with her and tell her granddaughter more stories in Vietnamese whenever they spend time together. As a result, her granddaughter's Vietnamese has really improved. The Tran parents said "since the grandmother came to Canada our daughter has spoken Vietnamese much better. Previously, when she was living with just her parents, she preferred to speak English as she knew that her parents could speak English. However, now when her grandmother is living with us, our daughter knows that her grandmother cannot speak English. Therefore, she always tries her best to respond in Vietnamese whenever she plays with her grandmother" (T.12).

Meanwhile, although Kim wanted to maintain Vietnamese for her grandson she did not find it necessary to be so strict with him in learning the language. Based on her experience with

her son, Kim thought that although she did not force her son to learn and speak Vietnamese, her son has automatically started speaking Vietnamese again since his son was born. In her opinion, both her son and her grandson have the chance to learn one more language like Vietnamese but it is not obligatory for them. She believed that both her son and her grandson understand what she says in Vietnamese but they can only respond to her a little in Vietnamese.

As Van shared a similar worry about her children's possibility of losing Vietnamese in their later life she made use of every time the Hoang daughter visited her apartment to read Vietnamese stories to all the children. Van stated that:

I read stories in Vietnamese to the children. As the Hoang parents brought a number of Vietnamese story books, I read her [the Hoang daughter] and also my children these books. I am quite worried about their Vietnamese because my children and other Vietnamese children speak English to each other quite often. (V.6)

Apart from supporting for the children's learning Vietnamese, these grandmothers and Vietnamese friend also attempted to introduce the children to some Vietnamese traditional customs. Coincidentally, the customs of the Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival appeared to be these adults' common topic that they talked about helping the children learn about Vietnamese culture. Le said "I also remind them about some Vietnamese customs in the festival such as making Chung cake, giving 'lucky' money, making a special meal on the New Year Eve to worship the ancestors, and saying kind greetings to each other on this occasion" (L.7). In Le's point of view, it would be the best thing to do if they invited some Vietnamese friends to celebrate the festival together. She thought her granddaughter might learn more about Vietnamese customs and the traditions of the festival when all the adults shared Vietnamese traditional food and talked about what they used to do for the festival in their childhood.

Kim admitted that in the past she had not prepared much for the Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival because she was busy with her business. However, in Canada she prepared some typical fruits to dedicate to the ancestors and explained the meaning of the festival to her children and grandchildren. She maintained the custom of presenting “lucky” money to them. She felt comfortable knowing that although her children and her grandchildren might remember only ten per cent of what she explained about the festival’s customs and traditions, in contrast they remembered 100 per cent of receiving “lucky” money from their parents and grandparents. As stated previously, Kim appeared to be an open-minded person. She acknowledged that her children and her grandchildren are Vietnamese and she would love to maintain something related to Vietnamese culture for them. However, she seemed to be negotiating with herself by reasoning that she did not want to force her children and grandchildren to follow any Vietnamese customs and traditions that might negatively influence their current life. In Kim’s opinion, it would be her children and grandchildren’s option to learn Vietnamese or take the opportunity to understand Vietnamese culture.

In summary, the supports that Vietnamese immigrant parents of this study received from their children’s teachers, grandmothers, and their Vietnamese friend appeared as responses to personal needs of theirs related to settlement and encouragement of their children’s early learning and development in a foreign country like Canada. In this subsection, I presented three main types of support that emerged from the study including: support by providing Vietnamese immigrant parents with parenting knowledge and skills, support by providing Vietnamese immigrant parents with essential information about settlement resources and services, and support Vietnamese immigrant parents by helping their children maintain Vietnamese and Vietnamese culture. Whereas most of the teachers’ supports were directly beneficial to the

children, the grandmothers and their friend seemingly helped Vietnamese immigrant parents better to not only bring up their children but also to deal somewhat with numerous challenges in their own lives. In the next section, the challenges that Vietnamese immigrant parents faced in building and maintaining the school, family, and community partnerships that supported their children's early learning and development are delineated.

Challenges of Vietnamese Immigrant Parents in the Partnerships

As discussed in Chapter Two, language barriers, time constraints, parents' lack of understanding about the school system, and parents' lack of the school support were shown to be the predominant factors creating challenges to Asian immigrant parents' involvement in their children's education (Sohn & Wang, 2006; Harris & Goodall, 2008; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Hornby, 2000). Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study were not an exception. However, while no difficulties were identified related to working with their children's grandmothers and their friend building and maintaining the partnerships, most Vietnamese immigrant parents mentioned a number of challenges that they had with the teachers and the school. The challenges were reported as follows:

Time constraints. As mentioned previously, the Hoang father explained how he hurried to drop off and pick up his daughter due to the limited parking time. This meant that he missed reading most of the announcements posted on the school's bulletin board about activities organized on some special days such as Valentine's Day or Halloween's Day. In addition, he almost had no time to communicate with the teacher to be updated about the school activities or social events. This unfortunately resulted in the family's failure to provide their daughter with some greeting cards and gifts for her classmate on Valentine's Day.

At the same time, the Hoang child's teacher, Stella, told me that she wanted to talk more professionally to the parents and sometimes she needed to talk one on one with the parents. However, she knew that she did not have time to talk to the parents privately in the daycare centre. She was also afraid that if she grabbed the parents for a conversation in the daycare centre she might make these parents feel stressed because the parents might think there was probably something wrong with their child. In addition, Stella found it necessary to organize a general meeting with parents twice a year so that she might have more chances to communicate with all the parents. She felt sorry for the fact that the daycare centre's annual parent meeting is cut short by a pot luck involving international food. As a result, the meeting between parents, the daycare manager and staff, and the parent board is typically short.

Meanwhile, the Tran father spoke on behalf of his wife that both parents did not attend many activities at the daycare centre and they did not have much time to volunteer for the classroom activities. At the same time, Ruvy recalled that:

When she [the Tran daughter] started she was not yet a year old. Her grandmother came too so we were kind of limited to her mother and father's exposure for a while because they would all come in, then the grandmother would stay, and the mother and the father would go to school or go to work. So for the first two or three weeks, there was a lot of exposure to the grandmother. So I mean it was not like we never saw the mother and the father, they would come in to drop off, they would come in to pick up, and they would all go. (R.10)

The Nguyen father admitted that he rarely picked up his son from the daycare centre and he was not able to volunteer for any activities organized in the daycare centre due to his shift work. The Nguyen father added that "I usually work 12 hours day and night. There's lots of

times when I come home after my shift, I am exhausted so it's hard for me to sit down with him and have good quality time because my eyes are closing. I am falling asleep" (N.20). The Nguyen father's time constraint not only prevented him from getting involved in his son's early learning at school but also limited his involvement at home. Consequently, building the partnerships with the school appeared to be impossible for him. Similarly, Jenifer admitted that she suffered from time constraint. She found it challenging in the daycare centre to watch the children and at the same time attempt to talk to parents. She stated:

I would say the only challenging thing would be the limited time. We are encouraged to talk to the parents but I mean we are also told "Don't talk so much that you are not watching the other children because your first priority is to watch the children." You sometimes want to talk to the parents when they pick up their children. However, you are just so busy with the transition or doing something else with the children that you cannot. (J.15)

In this study, I observed that not only the parents but also the teachers did not have enough time to have frequent communication discussing their concerns about the child's schooling except for updating some basic information about the child's day in the daycare centre.

Parents' limited understandings of the school's operation. In contrast to the fact that children in Vietnam can be sent to the daycare centre when they are not seriously sick and the teachers may help the child take medicine according to the prescription and drugs provided by parents, most daycare centres in Canada establish a rule that parents are not allowed to take their child to the daycare centre when the child is sick or has a virus. As new immigrant parents, the Tran parents did not know about this basic rule that led to their misbehavior in the daycare.

One day, the Tran daughter was sick. As they were both busy parents, they needed more of the teachers' support to take care of their daughter when she was sick. Therefore, they took their daughter to the daycare centre as usual. However, on coming to the daycare centre, they were asked to take their daughter home for at least 24 hours' rest. The Tran parents were informed that they were able to take their daughter back to the daycare centre only when she became better. Obviously, even a very basic rule of the daycare centre, without being explained in advance, may create confusion and the wrong behavior of Vietnamese immigrant parents like the Tran parents in this study.

To show their respect to the teachers, the Tran parents explained that this wrong behaviour occurred because they did not have any friends who had experienced this situation to tell them about the rule. However, when asked about the teacher's support for immigrant parents like them, the Tran mother expressed an unpleasant truth that they seemingly accepted that "the daycare teachers...actually I found that they treat us the same as the other parents. The teachers assumed that immigrant parents should know all the rules and they are not responsible for teaching us such rules. They are just responsible for taking care of and educating our child but not us. The teachers have been treating us the same as other parents" (T.9).

Related to this challenge, the Nguyen parents showed their slight conflict between each other. The Nguyen mother perceived that her son as well as his classmates just play and do not learn so much when attending in the Canadian educational system. In her point of view, she was disappointed that children in Canada go to school just for fun and that they are not well-equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills such as numeracy, writing and reading skills to be ready for their Primary level like they used to be in Vietnam. Meanwhile, the Nguyen father tried to explain that although educators in Canada did not try to facilitate deep subject area learning for

the child he was pleased to see the improvement in his son's social skills that met his wife's and his expectation. The Nguyen father reminded his wife of their responsibility for teaching their son what they would expect from him. I definitely understood the conflict between them as the Nguyen mother was born and brought up in Vietnam and she was familiar with the more structured and academic educational manner of the Vietnamese educational system.

The final illustration for this challenge was the Hoang parents' concern about how their daughter was being taught at school setting. Unlike in Vietnam where parents are frequently receiving the teacher's feedbacks or comments on their child's progress, the Hoang parents found it strange when the teachers in Canada hardly commented on their child's development and didn't make comparisons between their child and her classmates. Noticeably, in the Vietnamese immigrant parents' opinion, comparisons among children may reveal where their child is ranked in the classroom and may inform them what subjects or skills their child is good at or what needs to be improved. The Hoang father referred to his personal experience that the teacher once told him that his daughter was not good at using scissors and asked him to let his daughter practice using scissors more at home. He said this was the first personal feedback that he had received from the teacher since his daughter started school in Canada. He expanded:

I have never received any comments or feedbacks from her teachers, for example "your child is good at this and not good at that." The teachers did not give any feedbacks or comments. They just let my daughter bring home what she made at school. Maybe it is the way the teachers do things in Canada. But I did not know whether my daughter is doing well at school or not. We are interested in knowing whether our daughter is doing better or worse than what the school requires. We did not know at what level our

daughter was in comparison with her classmates. We wanted to know what level our daughter is ranked at and what level of each subject or skill she is good at. (H.8)

At the same time, the Hoang parents added:

As immigrant parents, we have had no experience in some activities organized at school.

However, the teacher assumed that we already knew about them, so the teacher did not provide us with any information regarding such activities. As a result, our daughter missed some activities in her first year and we felt sorry for her. (H.12)

Together with the Tran parents' sharing about the teacher's assumption, the Hoang parents' explanation revealed that with their assumption that immigrant parents must have known about the school's operation and the teacher's teaching styles in Canada, the teachers unintentionally created problems for these Vietnamese immigrant parents and their children. Their limited understandings about the school's operation would only be improved by learning through negative experiences.

The loose partnerships among the teacher, the grandmothers, and the friend.

Undoubtedly, the grandmothers and the Vietnamese friend participated in this study have been building up and maintaining effective partnerships with Vietnamese immigrant parents in order to assist Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning and development. Nonetheless, they all realized that their support for Vietnamese immigrant families would be more effective if they were able to build up the partnerships with the school.

Based on the tradition of close kinship care in an extended family and the family-oriented perception maintained in her family, Le was supported by all other family members to fly to Canada to take care of her grandchildren. She felt happy when her support was very beneficial for her children and grandchildren thanks to what she was able to do in the home setting.

However, she acknowledged her communication and interaction with the teachers was limited because she did not know any English. Accordingly, Ruvy told me that a number of areas of misunderstandings occurred with the Tran family because Ruvy and her co-worker could not communicate with Le due to her limited English despite her very frequent visits to the daycare centre. Ruvy added that she and her co-worker found a different way to communicate with Le by noting down their requests in short written statements such as “Please bring diapers.” In Ruvy’s opinion, this way of communication worked for them. However, I disputed whether this kind of communication worked for Le. I doubted that without any English, the only thing Le could do was to bring the note back home for the Tran parents’ translation and response to the teachers.

In another example of communication difficulties, Kim whose English communicative skills are quite advanced thanks to her living in Canada for almost thirty years said that she wanted to send a message to the teachers that she loves her grandson very much and she expects the teacher to take over her role to ensure her grandson’s happiness at school. Therefore, she showed her concerns about her grandson’s day at school by asking some questions such as “who is her grandsons’ best friend?” or “who did her grandson play with today?” However, Kim confessed that “honestly I rarely go directly to my grandson’s classroom when I visit the daycare centre. I often stand outside to observe how he is playing” (K.6).

Van supplemented that:

Community members [the grandparents and she, as the Hoang family’s friend] indeed support the children and their family quite a lot, but probably their role is just less important than that of the parents. However, I do not know how to connect the community members with the teacher because in my opinion, it is necessary to consider in what ways community members can support the school and in what ways the school

can interact with community members. I think if community members drop off and pick up a child at school they may have more interactions with the school. If not, it may be difficult for them to partner with the school. (V.2)

She admitted that as the Hoang family's friend who has been much involved in the Hoang daughter's early learning and development, she has not had any communication or interaction with the teacher of the Hoang daughter. This was understandable as the Hoang parents' friend, Van may never have had opportunities to go to the Hoang daughter's school if the Hoang parents did not introduce her to it, for example by asking her to drop off or pick up their daughter.

Based on her experience, Van realized that the school welcomed not only parents but also grandparents or other relatives of the children to volunteer for the school activities. In fact, immigrant grandparents normally have more spare time than immigrant parents, and they also want to visit their grandchildren's school to see how their grandchildren learn, to play with them there, and even to help the school. However, in Van's opinion, the teacher needs active volunteers who have a good understanding of Canada's culture and can communicate in English in order to help the teacher effectively. As a result, regardless of their time availability, immigrant grandparents, without any English, felt shy and less confident to visit the school and participate in the school activities. Interestingly, when asked in what ways the school can support such disadvantaged adults to become involved more in their grandchildren's schooling, Van could not think of any kinds of support that should be provided by the teacher or the school. Instead, Van emphasized the grandparents' responsibility to improve their English by taking some free ESL courses available for temporary residents in Saskatoon.

Language barriers. As presented in Chapter Two, the English language was considered to be a dominant factor which challenges immigrant parents to effectively communicate and directly be involved in their children's education in the school setting. In this study, the language barriers were seen to be a challenge for Vietnamese immigrant parents by two out of three teachers. Stella told me that the Hoang parents rarely communicated with the teacher even to ask about the daycare centre's routine, and that this was probably due to the language barriers. This concerned Stella very much because the Hoang daughter missed a lot of benefits from the daycare. She felt sorry for the Hoang daughter as this child frequently missed the craft time. In addition, although she came to the daycare centre exactly at snack time, she refused to eat the snack and felt hungry later. Stella said that:

Probably the reason is the language problem. Immigrant parents, they never ask questions. Probably they are afraid. And they never ask about the daycare routine. I do not know why probably they are not comfortable about asking questions.... We [Stella and the Hoang parents] never ever discuss the routine. Every time she [the Hoang child] is missing craft. And parents, they never ask about the schedule for craft time, snack time, and circle time. Talking about the Hoang daughter, she missed every craft time in the daycare. (S.7)

Similarly, Jenifer thought that the language barriers can be challenging to immigrant parents. She provided me with an example:

I have not really experienced too many ineffective partnerships. Just the only thing is the language barriers. When the child got hurt or hurt somebody else the teacher always told the parents because the parents needed to know what happened to their child in the

daycare. However, they did not understand fully so this made it very difficult because we had to tell the parents and they had to sign too. (J.6)

Apparently, these two teachers assumed that language barrier might be the obstacle creating immigrant parents' hesitation in communicating with the teacher and challenging their communication with immigrant parents. However, most Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study did not present language barriers as their challenge in building the partnerships with the school except for one parent who thought that his communicative English was not good enough to enable him to participate in the parent board of the daycare centre. Meanwhile, a majority of these Vietnamese immigrant parents confessed that their limited understandings about the school's operation made them rather hesitant and confused when communicating and interacting with the teachers.

Summary of the supports for and challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships. In this section, I have presented the supports and challenges that Vietnamese immigrant parents had when building up and maintaining the school, family, and community partnerships. Consistent with previous findings from other studies, Vietnamese immigrant parents were faced with a number of challenges that appeared to be typical among immigrant parent populations such as time constraint, the language barriers, and parents' lack of understandings about the school operation. In this study, the pattern of the loose partnerships among the teacher, the grandmothers, and the Vietnamese friend was acknowledged as another challenge to Vietnamese immigrant parents. Besides, in addition to the support which was characterized by the nature of an early learning program, I have presented three other kinds of support from the teacher, the grandmothers, and the Vietnamese friend that are ethnically typical among immigrant parent populations, specifically Vietnamese immigrant parents. Figure 4.2

summarizes the supports for and the challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents in building and maintaining the partnerships with the teacher and other adults.

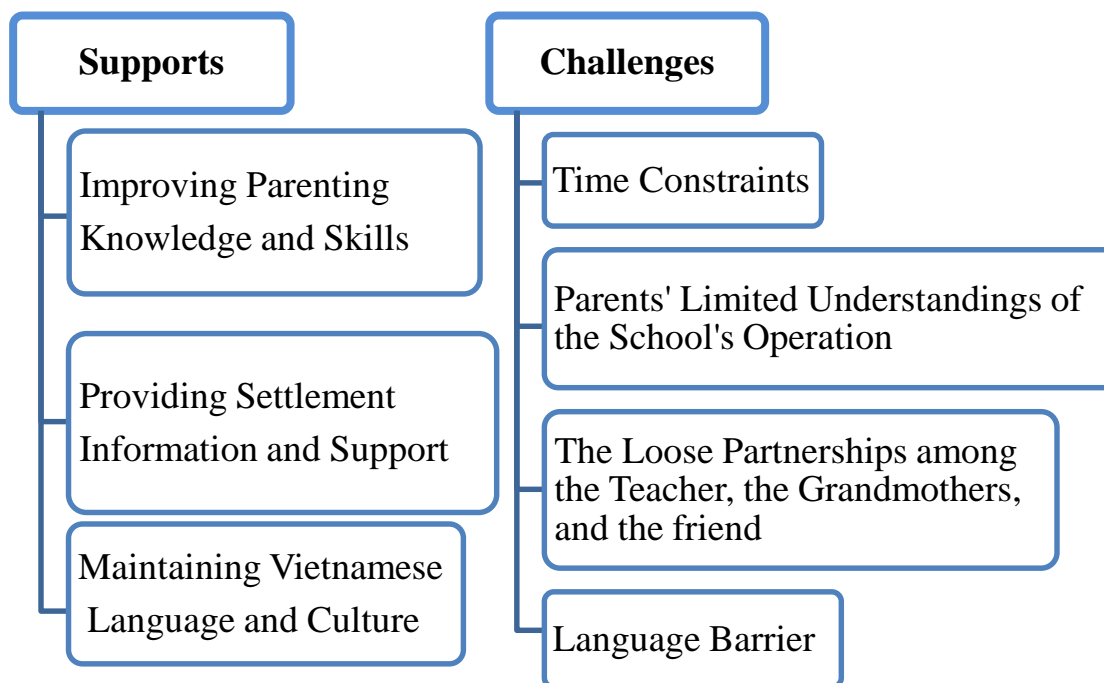


Figure 4.2: Supports for and Challenges of Vietnamese Immigrant Parents in the Partnerships

Vietnamese Immigrant Parents' Practices of the Partnerships

In this section, I used Epstein's (1997) Framework of Six Types of Involvement to analyze the practices that emerged from Vietnamese immigrant parents' responses in the semi-structured interviews and descriptive notes obtained from my observations conducted in the parents' home settings. I presented the results by outlining a number of statements associated with each type of Epstein's (1997) framework. This highlighted how immigrant parents perceived some types as more important than others. Specifically, most Vietnamese immigrant parents reported that they engaged in practices related to *parenting, communicating, learning at home, and collaborating with their children's grandmothers and their Vietnamese friend*. This reflected Vietnamese immigrant parents' recognition of the important connection among three partners including parents, the teacher, and other adults closely related with their children to

nurture and educate their young children. Particularly, the type of *collaborating with their children's grandmothers and their friend* appeared to be significant and frequently used by Vietnamese immigrant parents. One possible explanation for this might be that despite living in Canada where the Canadian family's individuality outlook is more prevalent, Vietnamese immigrant parents treasured a collectivist vision of family and culture in which the values of kinship care in an extended family and family orientation are highlighted. Unfortunately, most Vietnamese immigrant parents of this study did not mention the type of *decision making* which was considered as the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's focus of building authentic partnerships for all parents (Saskatchewan Learning, 2005). The practices were presented in order of frequency.

Practices related to parenting (type 1). Practices of parenting referred to basic responsibilities of families such as: (a) providing housing, health, nutrition, clothing, safety; (b) parenting skills for all age levels; (c) home conditions that support children as students at all grade levels; and (d) information and activities to help school understand children and families (Epstein, 1997, p. 76). In this study, Vietnamese immigrant parents acknowledged that their practices of parenting would highly contribute to their children's physical, social, and emotional well-being especially when their children started transitioning to a new environment such as school or community setting.

Provision of housing, health, nutrition, clothing, and safety. In order to support their young children's physical well-being, these Vietnamese immigrant parents firstly paid much attention to their children's nutrition. These parents realized that their children attend the daycare centre for approximately eight hours a day; therefore, at least half of their daily nutrition is obtained in the daycare centre. These parents also noticed the differences in feeding styles and

types of food served to children between the two cultures. For example, Canadian daycare teachers do not put much pressure on themselves and the children to finish the meals. On the other hand, Vietnamese immigrant parents tried to push their children to finish all the food that they are supposed to be eating. Therefore, if children refuse to eat more, Vietnamese immigrant parents tend to feed them instead of letting them leave the rest of the meal. Moreover, Canadian parents serve their young children with mashed to finely chopped food quite early, from six to nine months old, whereas Vietnamese parents usually prepare pureed food for their children such as porridge made of pureed rice, various kinds of vegetable, and of meat until their children are at least one year old.

Based on these practices, Vietnamese immigrant parents tried to prepare their children's meals at home by themselves instead of serving their children with processed food. Most meals were prepared accordingly to the Vietnamese cuisine style as these parents felt more familiar with Vietnamese food. Moreover, typically Vietnamese immigrant parents, like the Tran parents, sent meals prepared from home to the daycare center during her daughter's nursery time because she was afraid that her daughter might refuse to eat Western foods which, according to her observations, is mainly processed food.

In addition to nutrition, clothing is another interesting aspect that reflects different understanding of teaching children how to dress properly between Vietnamese immigrant parents and Canadian teachers. Although no Vietnamese immigrant parents referred to specific clothing issues the teachers' interviews revealed that they thought that immigrant parents, including Vietnamese immigrant parents, tended to have their children dress more warmly than necessary. This can be explained by the fact that Vietnam is a tropical country where the average temperature is always around twenty-five to thirty degree Celsius, and even higher in the

Southern areas. When arriving to Canada, Vietnamese immigrant parents are always worried about the high possibility of their children getting cold, especially in the winter time. As a result, Vietnamese immigrant parents tended to have their children dress in warmer clothes to protect themselves from the cold.

Finally, practices related to parenting to ensure their children's safety were taken into consideration by most Vietnamese immigrant parents. For example, they taught their children about safety skills by reminding them to watch out when going upstairs or downstairs and when closing and opening the doors. Besides, sending their children to a Vietnamese family for a play date was another way that Vietnamese immigrant parents used to make sure their children's safety in another environment out of the home. The Hoang mother stated that:

As my husband said, we have only one child so her safety is the most important. When my daughter goes out to play with some children in our neighborhood, I have to keep my eye on her most of the time because she has sometimes suffered from some disagreements caused by different languages and social norms between hers and her playmates. (H.11)

She continued by saying that "Honestly I find my daughter's safety is ensured when she is playing with her Vietnamese friends.... That is the reason why I like to take her to some Vietnamese families' houses" (H.11).

Home conditions that support children as students at all grade levels. As indicated in the previous part about Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualization of the partnerships, most Vietnamese immigrant parents agreed that their children should be sent to a school setting before the age of six. At the same time, they expressed their high expectations for their children's early learning. However, they tried to avoid appearing to force their children to acquire early

learning when they are too small. Therefore, these Vietnamese immigrant parents set up their living area so that they could utilize it for both playing and learning activities flexibly.

When I conducted the observations at three Vietnamese families' houses I noticed that every family set up at least a half of the living room area to be a playing and learning area for their children apart from their own room. Typically, the Hoang parents decided not to put sofas and coffee tables in the living room to increase space for their daughter's activities. In these areas, Vietnamese immigrant parents carefully categorized and arranged their children's toys, story books and craft facilities either in children's bin organizers or in carton boxes (O.H.1). The Tran parents decorated the living area with some pictures painted by their daughter (O.T.1).

In addition, these Vietnamese immigrant parents had bought the numerous kinds of recreational and educational toys for their children. The Tran families tended to buy girl's pretend toys such as cooking sets, baby doll caring kits, and making-up kits (O.T.2), whereas the Nguyen parents chose mostly boys' games including Lego kits, construction kits, and dinosaur-related games (O.N.2). The Hoang mother told me that she packed two suitcases of Vietnamese story books and wooden toys and Vietnamese story books for her daughter to bring with them to Canada because she thought her daughter's toys and story books in Vietnamese would make her daughter comfortable when she was taken to a new environment in Canada. Furthermore, Vietnamese story books are definitely necessary for her daughter's learning and consolidating Vietnamese (O.H.2).

However, I also found a common point that all three couples of Vietnamese immigrant parents selected sets of puzzles and bought story books and text books either in both Vietnamese and English for their children's intellectual development. In addition, thanks to the development of information technology, a variety of learning applications are available and easy to download

from numerous websites. In all three Vietnamese immigrant families, there exists at least one Ipad which had some applications installed relating to teaching preschoolers to learn numeracy, reading, spelling, and do calculations such as additions and subtractions in an interactive manner.

Parenting skills for all age levels. Noticeably, most parents repeatedly asked about their children's day at school to make sure whether their children had had a good day or whether their children had been faced with any problem that needed their support. The Nguyen mother told me that her main concern was her son's social well-being, so she kept asking about his mood and interactions with other children during the daycare time every single day when she goes to pick up him (N.11). Likewise, the Tran parents showed their worry about their daughter's social well-being because their daughter appeared to be rather shy in their opinion (T.11). Therefore, in addition to asking questions about the child's day, the Tran parents attempted to arrange their busy schedule to take their daughter to the public library every Saturday morning for her to socialize (O.T2.1).

The Hoang parents identified some parenting strategies that they had used with their daughter's care since she was young. First, the Hoang mother told me about the way she made her daughter stop crying. The Hoang mother observed that this strategy partly contributed to her daughter's excellent ability in counting the numbers although she did not mean to teach her numeracy. She told me that whenever her daughter started crying for some reason she asked her daughter to count from one to ten. As her daughter was busy with counting the numbers she stopped crying, and after a few minutes of counting, her daughter felt much better. The Hoang mother said:

When she is kittenish, I ask her to count from 1 to 10. I think that when she counts the number she will become calmer. When she is counting she will stop crying, after

counting for a couple of minutes, she will feel much comfortable. So whenever my daughter starts crying or asking for something that I don't want to give her, I ask her to count. Generally she knows how to count the numbers. (H.21)

Another parenting skill that the Hoang father suggested is based on his experience that he always tried to answer his daughter's questions and explain his daughter's concerns very thoroughly. The Hoang father explained that his attempts to provide thorough responses to his daughter made her feel respected and motivated her to ask questions to explore about things around her. Nevertheless, Vietnamese immigrant parents recognized that they should learn from their perceptions that Canadian parenting styles train young children to be independent and able to self-serve. They admitted that when bringing up their children, they tended to embrace their children much more than Canadian parents did. For example, they fed their children quite often rather than encouraging them to feed themselves or they helped their children get dressed instead of letting them do by themselves. They acknowledged that this resulted in their Vietnamese immigrant children's lack of independence and doing things for themselves. That challenges their children when they move into a new environment out of their home setting such as the daycare centre.

Information and activities to help school understand children and families. Only a few Vietnamese immigrant parents indicated strategies to support their children's teachers or daycare manager to understand their children and their families. According to the daycare centre's requirement, the Tran parents used to provide information about their daughter by noting down her schedule at home when they started sending their daughter to the baby room in the daycare centre. The Nguyen mother sometimes shared with the teacher some specific incident happening to the child at home in order to ask for the teacher's advice.

Practices related to communicating (type 2). While practices related to parenting imply basic responsibilities of families, practices related to communicating highlight the school's basic responsibilities (Epstein, 1997). Epstein (1997) categorized practices related to communicating into school-to-home and home-to-school communication. All Vietnamese immigrant parents realized the importance of communication with the school. In general, most parents felt pleased with the teachers' willingness to respond to all their questions or provide suggestions or explanations to them when they stated their concerns about the school activities or about a child's problem. Surprisingly, none of the Vietnamese immigrant parents participating in this study reported their participation in any formal meetings with the teachers. However, there were some noticeable issues regarding communication practices as stated by Vietnamese immigrant parents.

First, Vietnamese immigrant parents' needs for initiating the communication with the school were to ask about their children's day in the daycare centre, to state their concern about their adaptation at the beginning as newcomers to Canada or identifying a child's problem for the teacher's advice, and to receive clarification about the school information written in the notice or announcement sent to home from the school. For example, the Tran mother said that she usually talked to the teachers whenever she dropped off her daughter in the morning and picked her up in the afternoon. She added that she had obtained more information about her daughter's day at the daycare by talking to the teachers. The Hoang mother directly contacted the teacher to state her concern that her daughter appeared not to understand the teachers and her classmates due to her limited English. However, the teacher reassured her that her daughter was able to understand the teacher and her friends. The Hoang mother further added that:

My daughter has a mailbox where the school staff sometimes leaves a message or a notice for me. I personally think that the school staff and teachers all do very well.

However I do not understand exactly what was written in the notice. It is because I have never experienced such activities, so I do not understand and know what to do. I even do not know whether my understanding is right or not. Sometimes I figure it out by myself.

Sometime I seek out the school staff or the teacher to explain further. (H.18)

Second, the frequency of communication with the school initiated by Vietnamese immigrant parents tended to decrease upon their children's level of adaptation to the school setting. The Hoang mother stated that "just at the beginning when I felt very worried about how my daughter was adapting I met the teacher and asked her how everything was going with my daughter. Generally I found it alright. I did not talk to the teacher much" (H.18). However, based on her personal experience, the Tran mother suggested that parents should frequently ask the teachers about the child's day, otherwise the teachers may not continue updating about the child's day to parents anymore.

Third, Vietnamese immigrant parents found it easier to initiate and develop the conversation with Asian immigrant teachers than with Canadian teachers. It was explained that because Asian immigrant teachers such as Chinese or Filipino teachers have a similar background of oriental culture and social norms they understand better what Vietnamese immigrant parents mean to say to them. Van who is currently a Vietnamese immigrant parent stated that:

I realized that if I put the same question to both Western and Asian teachers, the Asian teacher provided me with the information that I needed to hear. That is why I could continue talking to her, so our conversation kept going on longer. When I talked to a

Western teacher our conversation suddenly ended because I did not know what more to say. (V.8)

The Tran father identified his inability in maintaining the conversations with his daughter's teacher who is a Western born one. According to him, the conversations between him and the teacher were very short because he did not know what to say except for asking for some basic information regarding his daughter's day at the daycare.

Finally, no Vietnamese immigrant parents reported their participation in any formal meetings with the daycare teachers. In their opinion, the parents should have better understandings about what the children should be taught at this age. And more significantly, the parents should understand about the educational philosophy as well as the methodology of teaching and learning followed by the school. Therefore, they thought that it would be more effective if the school could organize a kind of meeting in which the teachers instruct immigrant parents what to do and how to support their child when the child has just immigrated to Canada and started school.

Practices related to collaborating with the children's grandmothers and a Vietnamese immigrant family's friend (type 6). Most Vietnamese immigrant parents perceived the concept of "community" as defined in Epstein's (1997) framework that refers to either the children's neighborhood or organizations providing resources and services to the school. In this study, apart from the teachers, Vietnamese immigrant parents partnered with other adults including their children's grandmothers and their friend selected based on the relational proximity with the focal Vietnamese immigrant children. All Vietnamese immigrant parents agreed that their collaboration with their children's grandmothers and their friend was

significantly beneficial for the children's early learning and development as well as for their settlement in a foreign country like Canada.

Basically, some Vietnamese immigrant parents reported that they took turns with their children's grandmothers to drop off and pick up the children to the daycare centre. In addition, these Vietnamese immigrant parents practiced the partnerships with these individuals by asking for their support for preparing the children's meals or taking care of the children when they are busy with going to school or working. When asking their children's grandmothers or their friend to take care of their children, Vietnamese immigrant parents provided information about the children's schedule so that the grandmothers or the friend knew and were able to follow it in order not to make the children confused. For example, Kim said that when the Nguyen parents allowed their son to sleep over in her house they let her know what time their son should be fed with milk and what he should do before going to bed like brushing his teeth. In another case, the Hoang father informally told me that he sometimes asked Van how to cook a certain kind of food that his daughter used to eat in Van's house and would like him to cook for her at home.

More importantly, these parents collaborated with the grandmothers and the friend to assist their children's early learning and personality development. For example, the Hoang parents sometimes exchanged Vietnamese stories with Van as Van usually read Vietnamese stories for her children and even for the Hoang daughter whenever she visited Van's house. Furthermore, the Hoang parents took their daughter to play in Van's house quite often so that she could have more opportunities to communicate in Vietnamese with Van and her family members.

Practices Related to Learning at Home (Type 4). Because Vietnamese immigrant children in this study attended the daycare centre they had not been introduced to a formal

education which requires their parents' involvement in assisting them to do their homework or providing more extra-curricular activities out of the school setting. Nonetheless, due to the value of education and high expectations for their children's early learning, each family tried to support their children's early learning in various ways and based upon their personal conditions.

Learning is playing and playing is learning. As previously indicated, providing their children with a variety of learning toys and games was a common practice related to parenting among Vietnamese immigrant parents. This allowed Vietnamese immigrant parents to conduct their children's learning through playing without their children's consciousness. This practice is consistent with the philosophy of early learning stating that when teaching young children educators are conscious about their teaching whereas learners are not. As a result, without any pressures of learning, young learners can easily absorb all what educators provide to them.

Knowing about their son's interest in exploring about dinosaurs, the Nguyen parents bought him an interactive game on smart television about this kind of reptile animal. From my observation, when playing this interactive game, the Nguyen son was able to distinguish different kinds of dinosaurs, categorized dinosaurs into plant eater and meat eater groups, and realized what kind of plant dinosaurs like eating. In addition, the Nguyen parents bought their son toy dinosaurs and Lego dinosaurs to make a collection. When I conducted the observation at the Nguyen family's house I heard the Nguyen son ask his father to fix a broken plastic dinosaur. While gluing the broken pieces of the dinosaur, the Nguyen father asked his son some questions like "which one is the long leg or short leg?" and "which leg should be glued as the front leg?" to get his son involved in the fixing process (O.N2.2). After fixing the dinosaur, the Nguyen father asked his son some more questions such as "what kind of dinosaur is this?" "is it a plant eater or meat eater?" "what is the difference between a plant eater and meat eater?" and "why can a meat

eater dinosaur eat meat”(O.N2.3)? Through the observation, I could verify what the Nguyen parents shared in the interview about their son’s excellent knowledge of dinosaurs. The Nguyen mother stated in the interview that:

We have a dinosaur book in which the dinosaur names are long and difficult to pronounce, however he is able to read them so easily. He has got a good memory of dinosaurs. By looking at the face and the body, he can recognize which kind of dinosaur it is. (N.15)

Another quotation illustrating this practice related to learning at home was taken from the Hoang parents’ interview. The Hoang mother said:

In addition to playing “hide and seek” or some pretend game with my daughter, I prefer reading books to her. Otherwise, I tell her some riddles like “how many legs does a duck have?” “how many legs do two ducks have?” and so on. (H.20)

It appeared that the Hoang mother taught her daughter some Mathematical knowledge on purpose. However her daughter thought it was just a game that she enjoyed playing with her mother. This resulted in the fact that a four year old girl like the Hoang family’s daughter can add and subtract single digit numbers fluently and accurately.

Being a “co-learner” with the child. Learning a new song or alphabetical letters with their children was another practice related to learning at home presented by Vietnamese immigrant parents. The Tran father said that as an immigrant parent, he knows little about the local culture and lifestyles, even some popular English songs, and these he learned by himself. He stated that:

I did not know some popular children songs in English so I had to learn them by myself so that I could sing with my daughter. Actually, I learned to sing some English songs from my daughter when she learned from the daycare centre and sang at home. (T.13)

The Tran father further added that he and his wife took their daughter to the library every Saturday morning so that she could learn some new songs and stories there. At the same time, the parents might learn about new songs and stories with their daughter because they did not know such English songs even though they were popular in the local community. Likewise, Van told me her similar experience regarding when her daughter came home babbling a song that she learned from the daycare. Van tried to search the lyric of the song on the YouTube website and learned how to sing the song with her daughter. Meanwhile, the Nguyen parents started their son's learning about alphabetical letters by listening to and singing some alphabet and phonics songs with him when he was one year old. They said that:

We started with him when he was little. We watched some video clips about alphabetical letters on the YouTube website. For example, we watched something like A for apple, B for ball, etc., and then we got phonics of the letters, and then he figured out how to read. I meant he can put the sounds together, and then he can read a lot of words. (N.15)

Providing the child with additional education and extra-curricular activities. Most Vietnamese immigrant parents acknowledged that they supported their children's early learning by providing them with extra-curricular activities by taking them to dancing class, music class, and soccer class. Moreover, some parents were afraid that their children, when attending in the Canadian educational system, may not obtain adequate knowledge of Math. The Nguyen mother asked her friends to bring her some textbooks on Math and Vietnamese from Vietnam so that she could use them to teach her son. Therefore, she sometimes let her son either learn Math by doing

exercises in the textbooks or by playing some Math games online. The Nguyen mother explained her interest in teaching her son some Math at home in that:

I was terribly bad at Math when I was in Vietnam. The fear of Math was still there when I attended school in Canada. However, when I upgraded to high school I became one of the best students at Math. It was amazing. I want my son to be good at Math, so later on, if he wants to go to university or to be an engineer requiring a high level of Math he will meet that requirement. (N.14)

Likewise, when observing the Hoang father playing with her daughter at home, I realized that the Hoang father also taught his daughter some Math. He opened a Math application on the Ipad and learned with his daughter. As the Hoang daughter was familiar with this activity, she comfortably did some additions and subtractions as suggested by her father. For example, the Hoang father asked his daughter to read out loud “how much is two plus five?”, then his daughter said “five then raise one finger is six, then one more finger is seven”. When her father asked her to do the subtraction “How much is ten minus eight?” she raised all ten fingers, then she curved eight fingers, and figured out there are two fingers left (O.H2.2).

Mathematics is not the only subject that Vietnamese immigrant parents introduced and asked their children to practice at home. It was observed that they helped their children learn spelling, reading, and phonics as mentioned in the previous section.

Practices Related to Volunteering (Type 3). Most Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study attempted to volunteer for the daycare centre’s activities despite their busy studying and working schedules. When asked about the reasons for doing volunteer work, they all shared a fairly common idea that it was for their children’s early learning and well-being. In other words, they thought that their voluntary participations in the school activities might contribute to their

children's early learning and development to some certain extent. The Nguyen mother explained that:

As you know, he [her son] is the only child. And I almost do not know how he interacts and responds to other friends or teachers in a certain situation. I do not know so I would love to see and observe him how he is in the school setting. After that, I will have more topics related to his school for my conversation with him at home. I can teach him more and understand him more because there may be the other sides of my son that I do not see at home. So I told the manager that I would like to volunteer more. (N.19)

Likewise, the Tran mother said that "I think that I should participate in the school's activities to support the school and support my child as well. For example, I participated in fundraising activities to help the school raise more funds to buy toys for students" (T.5).

Meanwhile, the Hoang mother provided me with an interesting explanation that "the reason why I am a volunteer is I want to show my gratitude to the school staff and the teacher....At first I decided to volunteer for the school as I wanted to express my gratitude, but when I did my volunteer work, I felt happy to work with young children. Furthermore, I learned many new things that I had never known about young children's learning before" (H.16).

A number of practices related to volunteer work included supervising children during their fieldtrips or some extra-curricular activities, participating in fundraising activities, and assisting children's learning in the classroom were reported by Vietnamese immigrant parents. For example, the Nguyen mother used to volunteer for her son's class when the teacher took all the children to the park and to a swimming lesson. She said that all she had to do was to watch the children and ensure their safety. The Hoang mother sometimes volunteered for gluing

children's crafts and drawings in their scrapbooks or helping children to put the letters a, b, c... or the numbers in the right order.

It could be seen that parents' participation in their children's classroom varied in different school settings. While the Hoang mother was able to do volunteer job in the classroom the Tran mother reported that she was not allowed to stay in her daughter's classroom. She further added that:

This is a daycare centre. I am not allowed to stay there to observe my child. I just drop her off and leave. If the teachers organize an activity the teacher will take some photos and tell us something about how my daughter has enjoyed the activity. So sometimes I sign up to be a volunteer for some activities organized in the daycare centre. (T.7)

Practices Related to Decision-making (Type 5). The majority of Vietnamese immigrant parents said that they were not involved in the decision-making process and committees at the school. I observed that the parents almost did not acknowledge their eligible participation in the process of decision-making with the school. The most important reason was Vietnamese immigrant parents so valued the respect for the authority and the teacher that they might have never thought of participating in the process of decision-making at the school. It could be seen that during their children's attendance in the school, these parents tried their best to follow the school's rules and teach their child to follow the rules to express their respect and appreciation to the teacher and other daycare staff. However, the only parent who expressed his interest in participating the school's parent council found the participation unapproachable because he did not know whether he was eligible to be a member of the school's parent council. He did not obtain any information about how he could join in. Furthermore, he was hesitant to get to know more about the parental council because of his busy schedule and limited English.

In summary, this last section has presented Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices related to the partnerships analyzed by using Epstein's (1997) framework. I found that Vietnamese immigrant parents employed some similar practices to findings in other studies discussed in the literature review. However, some typical practices related to the partnerships employed by Vietnamese immigrant parents unfolded that were different from the literature review conclusions. Table 4.2 summarizes the practices related to the partnerships that Vietnamese immigrant parents adopted to support their children's early learning and development.

Table 4.2

Vietnamese Immigrant Parents' Practices Related to the Partnerships

Types of Involvement	Vietnamese Immigrant Parents' Practices
Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with housing, health, nutrition, clothing, and safety • Provide students home conditions that support children as students at all grade level • Parenting skills for all age levels • Provide basic information to help the teachers understand the children
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet and talk to the teacher verbally • Receive phone calls about the children's problem (in case of children's sickness)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive notices and announcements posted in the daycare centre's bulletin board • Seek the daycare centre manager's support for settlement information and services • No attendance in any formal meetings with the teacher
Collaborating with the children's grandmothers and a Vietnamese immigrant family's friend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take turns with the children's grandmothers to transport the children from and to the daycare centre • Ask for support to prepare the children's meals and care • Collaborate with the children's grandmothers and the parents' friends to facilitate children's learning about Vietnamese language and culture • Collaborate with children's grandmothers and the parents' friends to help the children improve their behaviours • Build and strengthen the bond between grandmothers and children for the children
Learning at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate learning activities with playing games and vice versa for the children • Become active co-learners with the children to learn about the host country's culture • Provide the children with additional education related academic subject matters (Numeracy, Mathematics, Spelling,

	Reading, and Sciences) and extra-curricular activities (dance, music, and soccer classes)
Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise children in the fieldtrips and some extra-curricular activities • Participate in fundraising activities organized by the daycare centre • Assist children's learning in the classroom
Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No involvement in any decision-making organizations or procedures in the daycare centre

Summary of the Chapter Four

The data that were analyzed from the semi-structured interviews and observations demonstrated that Vietnamese immigrant parents involved in this study utilized some common practices related to the school, family, and community partnerships as stated in the previous research in order to support their children's early learning and development. Many of these common practices were intended to assist their children's transition to a new setting such as a school setting or a community setting, and after that intended to improve their children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual well-being. However, in addition to some common practices related to the partnerships, Vietnamese immigrant parents employed some other strategies reflecting their specific conceptualizations of the partnerships determined by the influence of Vietnamese culture, the characteristics of young children, and the requirements of an early learning program. Based on the findings, the next chapter will entail my discussion of

the findings, implications, recommendations, and conclusion of school, family, and community partnerships that support Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning and development.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It takes a whole village to raise a child. (African proverb)

This chapter is divided into three sections. First, I present a brief summary of the entire study. Next, in the discussion section, I interpret findings, and relate these to the purpose of the study and to the review of the literature provided for this research study. Implications for theory, practice, and further study are included in the last section.

Summary of the Study

School, family, and community partnerships have recently received much attention from educators, researchers, and policy-makers since numerous studies have asserted many benefits of family and community involvement in students' academic and personal success at all levels (Barnard, 2004; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Jansorn, 2004; Griffin & Steen, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Peters, Seeds, Goldstein, & Coleman, 2007; Powell, Son, File, & Juan, 2010). Nevertheless, based on the literature review included in this dissertation, few studies have been conducted in a Canadian context to explore school, family, and community partnerships, and particularly those partnerships related to immigrant parents. As a Vietnamese immigrant parent, I struggled with supporting my child's early learning when she started attending a Canadian educational institution in Saskatoon. At the same time, I witnessed other immigrant parents face challenges when they tried to be involved in their children's school life. Therefore, I decided to conduct this study of school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant parents with the objective of capturing previously unheard Vietnamese parents' conceptualizations and practices related to the school, family, and community partnerships such as supported their children's early learning and development.

The three questions I used to clarify and expand this research purpose are as follows:

1. In what ways do Vietnamese immigrant parents conceptualize school, family, and community partnerships related to their children's early learning and development?
2. What supports and challenges do Vietnamese immigrant parents have in building and maintaining school, family, and community partnerships that facilitate their children's early learning and development?
3. What practices related to the partnerships do Vietnamese immigrant parents adopt to assist their children's early learning and development?

This study was primarily based on Epstein's (1997) Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence. In this theory, Epstein and her associates conceptualized school, home, and community as intertwined settings of relationships in which a child learns and grows. In addition, Epstein's (1997) Six Types of Involvement Framework cited six specific typologies of practices related to home, school, community partnerships, and was applied to explain how each practice affected students' educational processes.

The research methodology chosen for this study was a qualitative case study design. This case study strategy allowed me to explore, in an in-depth and intimate fashion, how Vietnamese immigrant parents conceptualized school, family, and school partnerships in an early learning program and what practices they employed related to the partnerships with the teacher and others in order to support their children's early learning and development. The participants included: three sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents who had at least one child attending an early learning program; three teachers who worked with the focal child, and two grandmothers and one friend of a Vietnamese immigrant family who were selected based on their relational proximity with the child.

The centerpiece of the data collection strategy took the form of semi-structured interviews conducted with all the participants. The majority of the participants agreed to have the interviews conducted in their homes; while two teachers made arrangement to conduct the interviews at their job locations. The duration of interviews ranged from one to one and a half hours. In addition, I conducted six observations of the Vietnamese immigrant families. While these observations occurred mostly in home settings, one observation was conducted at the public library, as arranged by one set of parents. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form indicating his or her agreement to participate in the study and granting permission to have the interviews tape-recorded. All participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used to ensure their confidentiality. Interview transcripts in Vietnamese were translated into English by me and validated by my ESL volunteer working at the Saskatoon Global Gathering Place. Interview transcripts and observation notes were analyzed to identify clusters of experiences and events that contributed to and defined coding schemes. Codes emerged from both the research questions and from the data itself.

Major findings emerged that addressed the three research questions (as above). In terms of the first research question about Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations of school, family, and community partnerships in an early learning program, four themes appeared: *partnerships as sharing the care and love for children, partnerships as mutual respect and reliance, partnerships as valuing and committing to children's early learning, and partnerships as effective communication.*

In relation to the second research question, I identified two themes: *supports for Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships* and *challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships*. Most Vietnamese immigrant parents perceived that they received

supports from their children's teacher, their children's grandmother, and their friend to improve their parenting knowledge and skills as well as facilitate their settlement in Canada. Moreover, the support for maintaining Vietnamese language and culture that Vietnamese immigrant parents received from their children's grandmother and their friend appeared to be prominent in this study. Regarding the challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships, the data revealed that Vietnamese immigrant parents' time constraints and their limited understanding of the school's operation seemed to be two main barriers to their partnerships with the teachers. Meanwhile, the language barriers, despite being popularly found in the previous studies, were not perceived as a challenge faced by Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study. However, another challenge that of the limited communication and interactions between the teacher and Vietnamese immigrant children's grandmothers and their parents' friend who closely support Vietnamese immigrant children was reported in this study.

Given that one of the study objectives was to describe Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices related to the partnerships that support their children's early learning and development, as mentioned previously, Epstein's (1997) Framework of Six Types of Involvement was used to code the different practices adopted by the parents when they became involved in their children's early learning. The themes for the third research question about Vietnamese immigrant parents' parental practices were presented in order of frequency, including: *practice related to parenting (type 1)*, *practice related to communicating (type 2)*, *practice related to collaborating with the children's grandmothers and a Vietnamese immigrant family's friend (type 6)*, *practice related to learning at home (type 4)*, *practice related to volunteering (type 3)*, and *practice related to decision-making (type 5)*. The findings for this research question generally supported those of prior research studies in this area and fitted with Epstein's (1997) types of parental involvement

recommended in her framework. However, there were a few surprises that make a unique contribution to advance the knowledge base and inform future educational practice and research directions in this topic.

Discussion of the Findings

In this section, the research findings are reviewed in light of the research questions and in accordance with the literature review relating to school, family, and community partnerships and Epstein's (1997) Six Types of Involvement Framework.

Conceptualizing the partnerships. Data collected from Vietnamese immigrant parents' responses in the interviews helped to answer the first research question. Four themes emerged from the data reflecting what meaning Vietnamese immigrant parents attributed to the school, family, and community partnerships. These four themes were *partnerships as sharing the care and love for children*, *partnerships as mutual respect and reliance*, *partnerships as valuing and committing to children's early learning*, and *partnerships as effective communication*. Because the daycare centre was their children's first school setting the parents acknowledged the fact that the teacher's care and love for their children would remarkably contribute to their young children's smooth transition and adaptation to a new environment out of their home. All the Vietnamese immigrant parents presented a common viewpoint of sharing care and love for children with the teacher and other adults. This was because they wanted to ensure that their young children were loved and taken good care of by all adults who surrounded them, especially by the teacher with whom the children spend most of time during the day. This relates to the principles stated in the policy framework for parent and community partnerships in education published by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education that indicates that parents and caregivers have the right and responsibility to be partners in their children's education. In order to provide

comprehensive support that meet students' diverse learning needs, educators, families, and community members are encouraged to work together (Saskatchewan Education, 1999).

Based on the findings, most parents felt pleased with the teacher's or other adults' caring about their children either at the daycare centre or in another setting out of their house. However, the findings showed that Vietnamese immigrant parents had their own reasons for expressing their care about their children in the school setting, apart from their intention of contributing to their children's well-being. One parent warned that the level of parents' consideration about their child might reduce or increase the level of the teacher's care about the child. This implied that parents should continuously show their care regarding their children to the teacher no matter how well their children adapted to the school setting. By maintaining and showing the teacher their interest in their children's schooling, parents believed they would positively impact the teacher's care regarding their children.

Data confirmed that Vietnamese immigrant parents' respect for and reliance on the teacher as well as their value for their children's early learning. Together with their shared love for and care regarding the children, these findings are consistent with the existing literature related to immigrant parents' perspectives with respect to becoming involved in their children's education (Daniel-White, 2002; Drummond & Stipek, 2004; Epstein & Sanders, 1998; Hill & Craft, 2003; Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003; Kim, 2009). However, on one side, the respect that Vietnamese immigrant parents showed to their children's teacher was beneficial for motivating the teacher to share opinions and give advice to them. On the other side, the respect may have made Vietnamese immigrant parents somewhat hesitant to raise their concerns about the teacher's methodology of teaching and evaluating their children in the classroom. As indicated in the review of the literature, Asian immigrant parents, including Vietnamese immigrant parents

rarely asked their child's teacher questions because they were afraid that they might convey disrespect to the teacher by appearing to challenge the teacher's knowledge or wisdom. In this study, most parents tended to ask the teacher about basic information related to their child's day at the daycare centre such as their children's mood, their adaptation, and their social skill development. Although their children's academic learning was one of the Vietnamese immigrant parent's interests they rarely asked the teacher about this. Instead, Vietnamese immigrant parents' support for their children's academic learning in the home setting was as their preferable type of parental involvement.

Furthermore, unlike the previous research studies showing that Asian immigrant parents tended to focus on supporting their children's successful learning in academic areas such as Mathematics (Kim, 2009), the Vietnamese immigrant parents presented their value and commitment to their children's early learning to help their children better integrate to the local country but not to lose their ethnicity. Specifically, on one side, they stressed the importance of the partnerships in supporting their children to learn English and better understand Canadian culture. On the other side, they attempted to facilitate their children's learning about Vietnamese language and culture.

Finally, effective communication was perceived as one important theme that Vietnamese immigrant parents attributed to the meaning of the partnerships. This confirmed the findings in previous research studies related to the school, family, and community partnerships where immigrant parents placed an emphasis on communication with the school and the teacher as one of the most frequent types of parental involvement (Beauregard, Petrakos, & Dupont, 2014; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Sy, 2006). In this study, the Vietnamese immigrant parents frequently practiced partnerships with respect to communicating with the teachers in order to be updated about their

children's day in the school setting. Moreover, when defining effective communication, in consistency with the interviewed teachers' perception, Vietnamese immigrant parents suggested that all the information related to the child's day at school should be honestly updated to them so that they could better support the child at home. As their children were too young to be the communicators between the teacher and the parents, these Vietnamese immigrant parents had a higher demand for communicating directly with the teacher by themselves in order to obtain further information about the daycare centre and their children's day in the school setting.

Supports for and challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships.

Consistent with the review of the literature, the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in an early learning program were reported to be beneficial for not only the children but also for the parents. In this study, the partnerships resulted in Vietnamese immigrant children's better adaptation and transition to a new environment out of their home and improvement of social skills. In addition to their development of basic academic knowledge and skills, Vietnamese immigrant children were supported as their parents, teachers, and others sought to strengthen their abilities for communicating in Vietnamese, together with their increasing understandings about Vietnamese culture. In Vietnamese immigrant parents' opinion, it was critical for their children's development and future success to be facilitated in learning both English and Vietnamese simultaneously when they were young. Additionally, maintenance of their ethnicity was apparently their parents' burning desire and was perceived to be generally valued by the multicultural nature of Canada. Unfortunately, while Vietnamese immigrant parents attempted to learn about the local country's culture together with their children, no evidence was found to demonstrate the school's support either for Vietnamese immigrant children's learning about their own culture. Instead, Vietnamese immigrant parents

mainly received the support for facilitating their children's learning about Vietnamese language and culture from their children's grandmothers or their Vietnamese friends.

Nevertheless, as these Vietnamese immigrant parents were first-time parents, they all indicated their need to improve their parenting knowledge and skills. Most Vietnamese immigrant parents admitted that they learned about parenting knowledge and skills either from their child's teacher, their child's grandmothers, and their Vietnamese friends. For example, they learned about preparing food and re-scheduling daily routines for their children, or helping their children to improve their behaviours. Noticeably, the findings revealed styles across the two cultures related to preparing food for the Vietnamese immigrant children. As one set of Vietnamese immigrant parent recognized that whereas Canadian parents tend to introduce finger food to their children at the age of about six to nine months Vietnamese parents feed their children with different kinds of pureed food until their children are at least one year old. The different styles of preparing food made Vietnamese immigrant parents feel worried about their children's potential unfamiliarity with the food served in the local daycare centre. As a result, a set of Vietnamese immigrant parents prepared food for their daughter in the first few weeks of sending her to the daycare centre. Therefore, support of providing further instructions about preparing the food for Vietnamese immigrant parents was necessary. Vietnamese immigrant parents all confirmed that this kind of support has been beneficial for their children's physical, emotional, and social development since the parents were better-equipped with adequate parenting knowledge and skills. In addition, the support of providing settlement information and services such as transporting the children to the daycare or providing care for the children was also reported by Vietnamese immigrant parents.

Regarding the challenges of Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships, time constraints and their limited understandings of the school's operation were recognized. These challenges confirmed the findings in the existing literature related to immigrant parents' barriers to become involved in their children's education. Specifically, Epstein and Jansorn (2004) concluded that parents often have the desire to help their children succeed in school but lack time, the knowledge, and necessary skills to assist their children. However, the challenge of time constraints was reported by not only Vietnamese immigrant parents but also by the teachers. This finding clarified Crozier and Davies's (2005) argument about whether it was the parents or the school that is "hard to reach." The previous research studies showed that some groups of Asian immigrant parents were perceived as "hard to reach" parents by teachers and other educational professionals due to their lack of participation in, and understanding about, school activities and events. In this study, I observed that not only the parents but also the teachers did not have enough time to have frequent communication to discuss their concerns about the child's schooling except for updating some basic information about the child's day in the daycare centre.

Moreover, Vietnamese immigrant parents attributed their rare communication or misbehaviours in the school setting mainly due to their lack of understandings about the school operation instead of language barriers as the teachers interviewed perceived. Although language barriers were a dominant challenge of immigrant parents in the previous studies (Kim, 2009; Sohn & Wang, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009) no Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study reported this as their obstacle. Instead, the lack of understandings about the school operation created confusion and hesitation for Vietnamese immigrant parents in their communication with the teachers.

In addition, the teacher's equal treatment of all parents, including Vietnamese immigrant parents, due to their working principles of equality made these parents' involvement more challenging. Indeed, the teachers' equal treatment of all immigrant parents was appropriately aligned to a principle stated in the policy framework of the partnerships in education by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. The principle of equity and respect for diversity that ensures that every child, young people, and adults are treated appropriately despite their different capabilities, potential, culture, and experience (Saskatchewan Education, 1999). Unfortunately, most Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study reported that the teachers treated them in the same manner with other parents. These parents stated a possible explanation that the teachers accidentally ignored the fact that Vietnamese immigrant parents do not have the same schooling and parenting experiences as some other parents do. In other words, the teachers made an assumption that Vietnamese immigrant parents must have thoroughly understood all the announcements or messages sent to home whereas Vietnamese immigrant parents might not. These Vietnamese immigrant parents also expressed that the announcements and messages sent from the school confused them and created what they perceived as misbehaviour. This explained one parent's statement that on one side she prefers her children to be cared for and educated by the Caucasian teachers so that the children can speak English as native speakers. On the other side, she wants to have an Asian teacher in her children's class in order to be able to communicate more effectively because the Asian teacher tends to understand more thoroughly what the parent meant to say.

Another misalignment between Vietnamese immigrant parents' expectations for their children's academic learning in early years and what their children are being taught in a Canadian educational system was reported. Based on their past educational experience,

Vietnamese immigrant parents expressed their expectation that their young children should be introduced to academic subject matter in an early learning program. Furthermore, Vietnamese immigrant parents believed that the teacher should let them know how well their children were doing in each subject area in comparison with their classmates. As mentioned before, to show their respect to the teachers, immigrant parents hardly asked questions to the teacher because they were afraid of challenging the teacher's wisdom. Possibly due to their respect for the teacher, Vietnamese immigrant parents dared not ask the teacher to explain to them about what their children were learning academically at school and how the teacher evaluated their children's competency in each subject area. However, they felt that they seemed to be "blind" about what their children were being taught and how their children's competency was evaluated at school. Therefore, Vietnamese immigrant parents themselves constantly figured out what academic subject matters or extra-curricular subjects they should teach their children at home basing on their own expectations and experiences.

The last challenge of Vietnamese immigrant parents in the partnerships was themed as the loose partnerships between the teacher and Vietnamese immigrant children's grandmothers and Vietnamese immigrant parents' friends. It was acknowledged that two grandmothers and one friend of a Vietnamese immigrant family played a significant role in supporting Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning and development. They worked closely with Vietnamese immigrant parents to take care of the children and facilitate their early learning in the home setting or in a community setting. However, their role to support Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning and development in the school setting was almost ignored and simplified. Two grandmothers were content with their role of dropping off and picking up the children from school and considered these activities as a way of partnering with the school.

Whereas, the Vietnamese friend of one Vietnamese immigrant family admitted that she did not have any opportunity to communicate with the school of the Vietnamese immigrant child and indicated that she was partially supporting the child's early learning in the community setting. No matter how much these grandmothers and this friend were concerned and dedicated their time and effort to support their children's early learning and development, their partnerships with the school were restricted due to their limited English and limited chances to actually get involved in the children's learning in the school setting. Unfortunately, the partnerships between them and the school seemingly appeared loose and superficial because the teacher and the school did not take any action to establish a real connection with them and vice versa.

In summary, Vietnamese immigrant parents received a number of supports from their child's teachers, their child's grandmothers, and others in which the supports for improving their parenting skills and for assisting their children's early learning of Vietnamese language and culture were apparently the most significant for their children's early learning and development. Apart from the supports, Vietnamese immigrant parents also suffered from some challenges that affected their practices of the partnerships. Two misaligned perceptions between the parents and the teachers regarding Vietnamese immigrant parents' wrong actions and rare communication with the teachers and their expectation for Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning of academic subjects were highlighted. Finally, time constraints were admitted as a challenge for not only the parents but also the teachers.

Practices related to the partnerships. In this section, the findings of the study, Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices related to the partnerships, are discussed in two separate subsections, including: observations related to the data analysis and coding related to Epstein's (1997) framework.

Observations related to the data analysis. Vietnamese immigrant parents adopted particular practices in their partnerships with others to support their children's early learning and development. From this study, a number of observations and insights have emerged the data analysis. First, the practices Vietnamese immigrant parents adopted are closely linked with their conceptualization of the partnerships. For example, these parents perceived that they should be the most responsible for their children's early learning and development. In practice, they attempted to take care of their children to ensure not only their children's physical but also social, emotional, and intellectual well-being. Specifically, they prepared food for their children to eat at home and in the daycare centre in the early weeks of sending their children to the daycare centre. They were involved in not only helping their children improve social skills by taking them to public places or extra-curricular classes but also enhancing their children's cognitive skills by facilitating them to learn both languages and literacy. At the same time, they conceptualized the partnerships as mutual respect for and reliance on the teacher, they showed their great appreciation to the teacher and their willingness to ask for and take the teacher's opinion or advice related to their concerns about their children's development.

Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices of involvement were impacted by the support available to them and the challenges that they were faced with during the process of bringing up their children. They learned from the teacher's ways of training their children to follow an appropriate schedule as they believed that the teachers were professionally trained and had experiences that elevated them as experts with young children. They sought for the children's grandmother help to prepare food for the children and teach them their mother tongue and ethnic culture since the grandmothers were the right supporters for most issues related to their own ethnical needs. However, apart from actively collaborating with the teacher to promote the

children's development of social skills and some basic life skills, Vietnamese immigrant parents perceived and defined themselves as principal educators of their children's academic learning in the home setting due to their observation of their children's limited access to academic learning in the daycare centre. In order to assist their children's academic learning, they bought textbooks, educational games or web-based applications to teach their children to learn Numeracy, Mathematics, Spelling, Reading, and Science at home. Additionally, they took their children to extra-curricular classes such as music, dance, and soccer classes.

Vietnamese immigrant parents' parental practices were due to the influences of their past educational experiences, their expectations for the children, and their children's individual needs. For instance, one parent, who suffered from her past experience of not being good at Mathematics and who acknowledged about Asian students' dominant ability in learning Mathematics, placed an emphasis on teaching her son Mathematics. Meanwhile, another couple of parents spent more time taking their daughter to public places or extra-curricular activities to improve her social communication and interactions because they had identified her shyness whenever taken out for social activities in public places.

Coding related to Epstein's (1997) framework. Epstein's (1997) Framework of Six Types of Involvement was used to code Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices related to the partnerships. The findings showed that Vietnamese immigrant parents' identified practices could be classified using the existing types recommended in Epstein's framework. While no new parental practices were to this framework based on my analysis, some interesting issues arose related to the partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant parents in supporting their children's early learning and development.

First, the practice related to parenting (type one) appeared to be the most predominant in Vietnamese immigrant parents' opinion. This was consistent with the existing literature in terms of how parents tend to express a greater level of involvement when their children are young and particularly at transition point from their home setting to a school setting or from a less to more structured learning environment (Sy, 2006). Like other groups of parents, Vietnamese immigrant parents expressed their greater involvement in their children's early learning and development both in the home setting and in the daycare setting. One noticeable reason for their involvement was to ensure their children's own meal and clothing styles as well as their children's limited English. In other words, these parents did not want their children to be challenged too much when being introduced to Western-styled food and English language for the first time in a new environment. In addition, in Epstein's (1997) view of the parenting dimension, parents are advised to help the teacher and the school better understand their children and their family. Although these Vietnamese immigrant parents expressed their confusion about the school operation and the teacher's teaching styles in Canada, the findings did not show their recognition of their important role to help the teachers understand about their children and their family by sharing further information reflecting their cultural values and their own perspectives in bringing up children to the daycare teachers. At the same time, no evidence was found to demonstrate the teachers' effort to enrich their knowledge of Vietnamese students' ethnic characteristics and cultural background. This might also challenge the teacher to assist Vietnamese immigrant children due to their lack of understandings about these students' background of ethnicity and culture. Consequently, Vietnamese immigrant children might suffer from this kind of disadvantage at the transition point from their home setting to the daycare setting.

Second, the practice related to communicating with the daycare centre, particularly the teacher, did not seem to be less important to Vietnamese immigrant parents. Although most Vietnamese immigrant parents felt welcome to communicate with the teacher they found their communication inadequate due to its short duration and superficial information obtained. One parent wished to know about the educational philosophy and the methodology of teaching and evaluating students of his daughter's school. In his belief, such knowledge might have helped him to continue his further support for his daughter's learning in the home setting that is aligned with what she learns at school. Unfortunately, no attendance in a formal meeting or a personal meeting with the teacher was reported by these parents. One teacher informed me of a parents' night when all parents are invited to visit and meet each other and with the daycare teachers and staff is organized annually by the daycare centre. However, this teacher made a comment that the teachers do not have enough time to discuss details with the parents during the meeting because the meeting involves a potluck meal in which they are too busy for such conversations.

Third, the practice related to collaborating with community, particularly with Vietnamese immigrant children's grandmothers and Vietnamese immigrant parents' friend, stressed a significant role of these partners in the process of bringing up and educating these children. With the tradition of valuing education, Vietnamese parents tend to put the first priority on and high expectations for their children's learning. When grandchildren were born their grandparents offered the most support for their grandchildren's education and growth. Therefore, it could be observed in the study that both grandmothers dedicated much their time and effort to support their grandchildren's early learning and development together with the children's parents. For example, one grandmother determined to spend almost two years supporting her children and her granddaughter in Canada despite being far from her husband who was living in Vietnam.

Obviously, the desire for becoming involved in the grandchildren's education was acknowledged among the Vietnamese immigrant children's grandparents. In addition, the findings showed the benefits of these grandmothers' support for their children and grandchildren. Moreover, time availability was considered as another advantage of the grandmother to allow her to become involved in her granddaughter's learning not only at home but also in the daycare centre. Nevertheless, no evidence showed that the daycare centre, specifically on the part of the teacher, actively or directly acknowledged the potential of these grandmothers nor were there attempts to involve them in their grandchildren's learning and development at school.

According to Mitchell (2008), grandparents in less industrialized societies can play important roles involving caring and love. Indeed, the continuing importance of intergenerational relationships and exchanges of resources amongst kin, and grandparents today, as an integral part of family life was confirmed in previous research studies (Grundy, 1999; McGlone, Park & Robert, 1999). Moreover, intergenerational learning at home can be advantageous for the school (Al-Azami, 2006; Kenner et al., 2007). Some activities such as cooking, gardening, storytelling, reading, and shopping organized at home should not only be viewed as fun but also as intergenerational learning opportunities for children. This was particularly apparent for immigrant grandparents sharing culturally, religiously, historically, and linguistically-based knowledge with their grandchildren. In addition to the fact that intergenerational learning provides a mechanism to extend school-home links and draw home learning into the classroom, grandparents can be potential volunteers in the school (Mitchell, 2008).

The practice related to learning at home adopted by Vietnamese immigrant parents confirmed their high expectations for their young children's academic learning. The parents of this study expressed their common perception that they would like to direct their children to

access higher education in their future. In their belief, the more educated their children are the more chance they will be able to find a well-paid job. The parents also thought that since they had obtained university degrees, their children must achieve at least the same or higher degree than their parents. They also acknowledged that it is important to build a strong foundation for their children during their early years. Therefore, introducing their children to academic subject matters at preschool level was emphasized by most Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study. As a result, when they supported their children's learning in the home setting, Vietnamese immigrant parents tended to teach their children to learn how to read and write during their children's preschool ages. Meanwhile, one teacher expressed her surprise when a Vietnamese immigrant student brought her two pictures with some words written independently by the child at home. In the teacher's opinion, writing at this student's age is something unusual. This example demonstrated misaligned expectations and views of young children's learning ability in the critical period of their early years between early childhood educators in Canadian educational systems and Vietnamese immigrant parents.

Regarding practices related to volunteering and decision-making, Vietnamese immigrant parents reported their attendance in some volunteering activities but recognized no participation in any decision-making procedures or organizations in the daycare centre. Whereas most research conducted on the school-home partnerships of immigrant parents demonstrated that immigrant parents, including Asian populations, seem to be invisible in the school setting due to their rarely direct appearance (Kim, 2009; Sohn & Wang, 2006, Sy, 2006) Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study were exceptional. They volunteered for the daycare centre's activities or events for numerous reasons. Interestingly, some parents took over volunteer roles in order to show their appreciation to the school and the teachers. This might be explainable that as

Vietnamese immigrant parents in this study are all well-educated and have only one child they have more advantages and desires for participating in the school's volunteer activities. However, it is a truly unpleasant fact that their appearance in the daycare centre has not been promoted at a deeper level of influence related to the daycare centre's operation or other advocacy on behalf of their children's interest.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Future Research

This study utilized the qualitative case study approach to explore Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations and practices related to the school, family, and community partnerships that support their children's early learning and development at preschool level. Data from this descriptive case study added to the present body of knowledge on the school, family, and community partnerships of immigrant parents in an early learning program. The collection of data was accomplished by the researcher interviewing immigrant parents, their children's grandparents and their friends, and their children's current teachers in a Canadian context. The findings of this study confirmed the partnerships established by immigrant parents, immigrant children's grandparents, and the teachers are beneficial for all partners, especially for immigrant children's transition, learning, and growth in their early years. Future research should be done to replicate the findings of this study with a larger population of participants in order to develop a larger source of data through which to explore themes that appeared to be prominent here.

I hope that despite this study's limitation of generalizability, early childhood educators in Canadian daycare centres might consider some findings and implications from this study to be catalysts for revising and developing their own activities and programs of school, family, and community partnerships. Readers might be well to review the parental practices adopted by the immigrant parents from this study and, based on their interpretation, determine how these

practices might possibly be incorporated into various school and home settings and examine the effectiveness of implementing these practices in such settings. Based on the findings of the study, I will present implications for theory and practice. At the same time, I will present implications for future research with hopes for enhancing this study.

Implications for theory. Epstein's (1997) Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence and her Framework of Six Types of Involvement were adopted in this study. Despite the research findings' consistency with dimensions of parental involvement suggested in her framework, I outlined some implications related to the framework. It cannot be denied that Epstein's (1997) framework focused on providing relatively detailed guidelines of the school, family, and community partnerships for schools applicable from elementary level to high school level. In the guidelines, school personnel were considerably instructed from changing their perceptions of parental involvement in their children's education to being equipped with knowledge and skills of building and strengthening the partnerships such as conducting workshops, planning and administering evaluation, and building action team related to the partnerships. Meanwhile, few guidelines for parents, the target population who should be well-equipped with knowledge and skills of building and strengthening the partnerships, were found. Indeed, the practices of the partnerships guided for parents were implicitly and inadequately presented through the guidelines for schools. Therefore, I acknowledged a possible gap of Epstein's (1997) framework since she and her associates did not provide detailed guidelines for strategies that parents might adopt to build, maintain, and strengthen the partnerships with the school. In the next section, I will draw some implications for Vietnamese immigrant parents' practices of partnerships with the hope of partially filling the gaps.

In addition, Epstein's (1997) framework covered the partnerships from elementary level to high school level. Meanwhile, in modern society, more mothers undertaking paid employment or further education after their maternity leave have to send their young children to daycare centres. In addition, due to the diversity of family structures such as single parent structured family or divorced family, more children are sent to daycare centres during their early years. The school, family, and community partnerships of such parents in supporting their young children at this level were very important. I have realized that Epstein's (1997) framework is rather generic and that most types of parental involvement suggested appeared to be applicable for a more structured learning environment. Future adaptation of her framework might include supplementary guidelines for the school, family, and community partnerships in some other flexible learning settings.

Similarly, although Epstein's (1997) type of parent involvement framework indicated that the teachers' home visits or the families' art performance as strategies to create better understandings about the family, Epstein (1997) did not explicitly present practices related to the partnerships of immigrant parents. Whereas numerous studies confirmed that the partnerships of immigrant parents were influenced by various factors, including their own ethnic characteristics, I suggest that researchers devising future editions of the framework might best attempt to provide the teachers with supplementary strategies of equipping themselves with knowledge and skills of partnering with immigrant parents.

Apart from the above implications for Epstein's (1997) Framework of Six Types of Involvement, this study contributed to the existing literature by supporting research that recognizes the importance of parental involvement in the school, family, and community partnerships. In particular, this study confirmed the significant role of immigrant parents toward

their children's transition, learning, and growth when being introduced to a new and more structured environment out of their home. At a time when few studies have been conducted that explore Vietnamese immigrant parents' school, family, and community partnerships that support their children's early learning and development at preschool level in a Canadian context, this study shed light on some misaligned perceptions, including:

1. Language barriers were not considered as an obstacle by Vietnamese immigrant parents of this study. In addition, these Vietnamese immigrant parents tried to become involved in their children's early learning and development not only at home but also more directly in the school setting by attending volunteering activities. In other words, they did not make themselves as invisible in the school as they have been documented in relation to other groups of immigrant parents in previous research studies.

2. Not only Vietnamese immigrant parents but also the teachers suffered from the time constraints that have been viewed as a dominant barrier for immigrant parents and thus their "hard to reach" status has been misperceived by the school administrators and teachers.

3. While the principle of equity and respect for diversity appears to be an advantage of the Canadian education system the Vietnamese immigrant parents were remarkably challenged by this principle in that they required but did not receive more time than some parents in terms of support from the school.

4. The role of grandparents in supporting their grandchildren's early learning and development has been almost ignored by the daycare centres in which the children in this study attended whereas grandparents' support is confirmed beneficially to maintain the cultural, historical, religious, and linguistically heritage of Vietnamese immigrant families whereas

Canadian educators are encouraged to respect and learn about the cultural diversity of every student and their families.

5. A misalignment between Vietnamese immigrant parents' expectations for their children's academic learning in their early years and the curriculum of Canadian early learning program, particularly at preschool level, was found.

Implications for practice. Implications for practice are discussed based on the six types of parental involvement identified by Epstein's (1997) including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community in which I will focus on addressing some misaligned perceptions discovered in the study.

Implications for practice related to parenting. In the parenting dimension, immigrant parents should provide full and open information about their children as well as their family to help the teacher and the daycare centre better understand them. For example, if the parents inform the teacher about the differences in preparing food for young children between two cultures they may lessen their hardship to prepare their children with the food brought to the daycare centre. Clothing habits of immigrant children appeared to be confusing to the teacher when the teacher saw the difference between Canadian and immigrant children's wearing opposite kinds of clothes in some specific conditions of Canadian weather. Thus, parents' explanation about their own clothing habits and their worry about their children's possibility of having a cold might work. Significantly, immigrant parents might be encouraged to provide honest and open information about the child's problems if applicable. Unlike in their own country of origin where the right of protecting private information may not be ensured, all Canadian educational systems are strict on this point. Therefore, the teacher should be honestly informed about the child's situation. This enables the teachers to best assist the child in the

daycare setting. In addition, it is suggested that immigrant parents discuss their expectations for the child's early learning with the teacher and let the teacher know what the child is learning at home. This will help the teacher know exactly where to work with the child in the classroom.

More importantly, immigrant parents can improve the teachers' awareness of their unique culture by actively organizing activities to introduce some typical traditions or costumes. For example, on the occasion of Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival, the parents may make a short presentation about Chung cake (a typical kind of cake in the festival) for the teacher and children and prepare ingredients to allow the children observe how to make Chung cake in the classroom. Or together with the child, the parents can draw some pictures of flowers decorated typically on this festival to present to the teacher. Or the parents can show the teacher and other children some photos in which their child wear his/her traditional costume or let the child wear the costume to the daycare centre on this occasion.

With regards to the home conditions that support children as students at preschool level, the parents might divide the learning spaces into different learning corners each of which focuses on each learning areas desired by the parents and the child. For example, the parents can name "Mathematics" corner decorated with the timetables or some colourful numbers, "Language" corners decorated with short poems or printed words, "Reading" corner with some books and a comfortable sitting space available for the child, or "Art and Craft" corner equipped with crayons, markers, pencils, drawing papers, and especially some pictures painted by the child.

Implications for practice related to communicating. The parents would be well advised to thoroughly understand their rights and responsibilities as a partner of the daycare centre when sending their children to the facility. By doing that, immigrant parents will be more active to become involved in their children's early learning at the daycare centre. Before the child

officially attends the daycare centre the parents are typically taken for a tour around the daycare centre by the daycare manager. The parents should take this chance to generate as many questions as possible to ensure that they obtain at least full information about the daycare centre's rules, parents' rights and responsibilities, the schedule and meal plans applied in the child's classroom and in the daycare. If necessary, the parents might ask for printed documents stating such basic information to bring home for further reference. At a later time, when they are not clear about any announcements or notices sent home, parents can initiate direct contact with the teacher. Due to limited time allowance, indirect communication such as emails or phone calls may work for further clarification or explanation. Otherwise, short messages or notices written down and given to the teacher may allow the teacher to read and reply when they have time availability during the day.

Implications for practice related to volunteering. At preschool level, volunteering duties that immigrant parents take over appear to be quite easy and simplistic such as supervising children in a fieldtrip or an extra-curricular activity. These volunteer activities do not require immigrant parents' special skills that need to be trained in advance. Instead, the teacher always gives instructions to all the volunteer parents. However, if the parents do not understand anything in the teacher's instruction they should actively ask for further clarification to ensure the success of volunteer activity. In addition, besides some volunteer activities organized by the daycare centre, the parents can actively suggest to the teacher some other volunteer activities that they are able to dedicate. For example, immigrant parents can volunteer to present about what they do in their job to the children to help their own child and his/ her classmates understand about jobs and job duties.

Implications for practices related to learning at home. Immigrant parents in this study have participated in their children's learning at home in various ways. As educated parents, they recognize the importance of balancing between learning and playing for their young children. They also utilize numerous electronic learning resources available to young children, thus their children not only learn about subject matters but also learn about IT skills simultaneously. However, parents are recommended to be well-equipped with knowledge and skills of supporting young children's learning in order to avoid putting much pressure on their children due to their high expectations.

Implications for practices related to collaborating with community. In this study, immigrant parents collaborated effectively with their children's grandmothers and their Vietnamese friend to support their children's early learning and development. It is advised that the parents should take their children's grandparents or any adults close to their child to visit the daycare centre, attending social events organized by the daycare centre, and enhancing relationships. In addition, immigrant parents should encourage grandparents to volunteer for the daycare centre. Immigrant grandparents' involvement in their grandchildren's learning in the daycare centre should not be limited due to the language barriers as most volunteer activities at preschool level are seemingly simplistic and manageable by people who used to have parenting experiences. Moreover, immigrant parents may help grandparents access available resources from the community such as ESL classes, social and healthcare services. In addition, it is time for the school to think beyond the parent partnerships. Instead, the school needs to extend a more holistic family-based approach that includes grandparents. Otherwise, grandparents potentially stay behind the scene forever despite their worthy contribution to their grandchildren's learning and development, the family, and the school.

Moreover, most immigrant parents, based on their own experiences, recommended that newly-immigrated parents should find the informant persons who have immigrated to Canada for a couple of years in the community prior to the new parents. These persons will be able to provide them more information and support because they are already familiar with the lifestyles and most organizational systems of the host country. Another consideration suggested that newly-immigrated parents should socialize more with local people rather than frequently gather in their own community.

Implications for practice related to decision-making. As mentioned in the implications for practice related to parenting, immigrant parents should fully request clear information about their rights of becoming involved in their children's learning in the daycare centre and the daycare centre's operation. By doing that, immigrant parents will know what organizations and positions are available for parental involvement so that they can take over when their working or studying schedule allows them. In addition, sharing with the teacher about their expectations for children's learning and what they are learning with their child at home may provide the teacher some ideas of subject matters or skills to supplement in the daycare centre's curriculum.

Implications for further research. Implications for future research are divided here into two sections: implications for research methodology and implications for research directions.

First, the implications for research methodology are presented. This study captured Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualization and practices related to the school, family, and community partnerships in an early learning program. In order to obtain a deeper exploration about Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualizations and practices related to the partnerships, the study limited the numbers of participants to three sets of Vietnamese immigrant parents, three teachers, and two grandmothers and one Vietnamese friend of a Vietnamese

immigrant family. The relatively small sample size limits the generalizability of the research findings that cannot fully represent the population of Vietnamese immigrant parents. Since the specific areas of school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families were identified in this study, future in-depth research focusing on one specific aspect with larger population might contribute to the body of knowledge on the topic. Little research was conducted to explore the partnerships of immigrant parents who have their children attend a daycare centre. This study focused on immigrant parents of young children and attempted to cross-check the findings by including the daycare teachers and other adults surrounded the focal child. However, in order to obtain a more holistic picture, daycare managers and daycare staff should be included in the study.

A consideration for further research would be to conduct action research with three Vietnamese immigrant families that participated in the study. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher captured some misalignments regarding the parents' conceptualizations and practices of the partnerships. Vietnamese immigrant parents could be invited to adopt some practices suggested to address such misalignments, perhaps within a period of six months. The daycare teachers engaged in this study would then work with the daycare manager and the researcher to develop culturally relevant and parent friendly materials to provide parents with parenting knowledge and skills such as creating an appropriate schedule or preparing some Western-styled kinds of food for children in the home setting. In addition, the teachers and the managers would work with parents to understand what academic subject matter is being currently introduced to the children at home. After that, the teachers would incorporate such academic subject matter in their classroom's activities. For example, the teacher could incorporate children's learning about numeracy with their pretend shopping activity; or the

teacher might teach children about units of measurement by organizing some simple science experiments. Moreover, the teacher could involve parents and the child in culturally appropriate learning activities that value the child's ethnic and cultural background and motivate the child's learning about his/her own language and culture in the home setting. Finally, the teacher, the daycare centre manager, parents, and the researcher could begin to evaluate and determine how much, if any, change occurred in Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning and development, for example, their transition and adaptation to the daycare centre, and their progress of learning some academic subject matter. As a result, the teacher, the daycare manager, parents, and the researcher might be able to identify which practices related to the partnerships work best to support Vietnamese immigrant children's early learning and development at preschool level.

Longitudinal studies of Vietnamese immigrant parents' partnerships beginning when their children are at preschool level and continuing through elementary level may be useful in examining the significance of the partnerships in children's early years for their smooth transition and success at higher educational level. In addition, a more detailed collection of demographic data of the participants and a deep analysis contrasting Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualization and practices related to the partnerships to specific demographic factors could reveal patterns of conceptualization and practices laid out along demographic attributes. For example, some demographic factors such as immigrant parents' social-economic status, immigrant parents' level of education, number of children, number of parenting years, and other demographics may provide adequate data and recommendations for improving such relations. Finally, as Vietnamese immigrant parents hesitate to communicate about their concerns or disagreement toward the authority or tend to talk less about their private life such as their

children's problems or their high expectations for their children's education, researchers working with this population should build up a reliable relationship with them before starting to collect data. During the data collecting procedure, researchers should create a friendly and trustful atmosphere that may increase Vietnamese immigrant parents' level of comfort to reveal more complex information related to their children's development.

Regarding implications for other research, future research on the habits of preparing food for Vietnamese immigrant children in their early years would be helpful for daycare teachers, managers, and staff to ensure Vietnamese immigrant children's physical growth. Another direction would be to conduct research on the involvement of Vietnamese immigrant children's grandparents in a Canadian education system. This study has just addressed the school, family, and community partnerships from the viewpoint of Vietnamese immigrant parents. Therefore, future research should be conducted on the topic from the stance of teachers and administrators. Finally, a future study comparing the perceptions and practices of the partnerships between the local and Asian immigrant teachers might reveal some suggestions for training programs on the partnerships with immigrant parent populations for early childhood educators and administrators.

Concluding Remarks

Due to the fact that children's learning and development occur in three influential contexts including the family, the school, and the community, the significance is undeniable of school, family, and community partnerships in which three spheres share overlapping responsibilities in meeting the urgent need to raise and educate children better.

The purpose of this research study was to explore the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in an early learning program. The intent of this inquiry was to capture Vietnamese immigrant parents' conceptualization and practices related to

partnerships that support their children's early learning and development. The findings revealed a relatively holistic picture of Vietnamese immigrant parents' school, family, and community partnerships including the meaning they attributed to the partnerships, the supports they received from the teachers and other adults selected based on the proximity with the focal child, the challenges that they faced when building and strengthening the partnerships, and their practices related to the partnerships.

Although most practices discovered in this study were consistent with types of parental involvement suggested in Epstein's (1997) framework, some findings of this study reflected the unique characteristics of Vietnamese ethnicity that influenced their adaptation of the practices. Raising a child is commonly symbolized with imagery related to nourishing plants. Most plants require soil, water, and sunlight to grow, just as school, family, and community are integral parts of a child's nourishment. The key to how well the plant will survive depends on adjustments made to the growing conditions to make up the deficits (LeBlanc, 2011). I recall a Vietnamese immigrant mother's commenting on the change of taste and appearance of bitter melons planted in two different weather and soil conditions in Canada and Vietnam despite using the seeds brought from Vietnam (Nguyen, 2013). In order to grow the bitter melons successfully in Canadian environmental conditions, this woman must have been cautious about the amount and quality of each element affecting the growth of the plant. In my opinion, bringing up and educating an immigrant child with his/her own ethnical characteristics in the host country might be more challenging for these three partners and require them slightly different practices related to the partnerships. Definitely, when a deficit occurs to the children in the school setting adjustment can be made in the home or community setting to help meet the child's needs.

In order to create effective adjustments in every setting, three partners, including the family members, the teacher, and community members need to be closely connected to each other. Pathways created by these three partnerships clearly support children's growth and development. More importantly, as stated by the Hoang father, the core element of effective school, family, and community partnerships was that all three partners have to trust each other and share the love for children so as to best support young immigrant children's early learning and development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Semi-structured Interview Questions for Vietnamese Immigrant Parents

Background information of parents:

How many years have you been living in Saskatoon?

Tell me something about your immigration.

What is your current job?

What is your educational level?

How many children do you have? How old are they? What school are they in?

Interview questions

1. What were you taught (by your parents and elders) about education and educators?
2. Should parents be involved in the education of their children in your opinion? Why? Why not?
3. Do you think children should be in school before they are six years old?
4. What do you expect children should learn at prekindergarten level?
5. How do you view an effective school, family, and community partnerships?
6. What makes you feel welcome in your children's school?
7. Do you attend schools' activities such as parent-teacher conferences?
8. Do you feel welcome in your child's classroom?
9. What do you do when you are in your child's classroom?
10. How do you communicate with your child's teacher?
11. Tell me a memorable experience that you had when communicating with your child's teacher.

12. Do you play with your children? What do you do with your children when you play with them?
13. What should parents teach their children at prekindergarten age?
14. How often do you take your children to your community activities or events? What benefits do you think your children will obtain from those activities or events?
15. In what ways do you receive the support regarding your children from your community?
16. What motivates or challenges you to get involved in your children's learning at school?
17. What recommendations do you have for other Vietnamese immigrant parents in order to build and strengthen a successful partnership with the school and the community?

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Questions for Teachers

Background information of teachers

How many years have you been teaching in a prekindergarten program?

How many years have you been in this school?

What is your degree level?

Interview questions

1. How do you view school, family, and community partnerships with parents in general and immigrant parents in particular?
2. Describe an effective family partnership with an immigrant family.
3. Tell me about a memorable experience with an immigrant family. What did you learn?
4. How do immigrant parents view a teacher-parent partnership in your opinion?
5. How do immigrant parents define an effective partnership in your opinion?
6. How did you start reaching out to immigrant families for partnerships? Why did this important to you?
7. In what ways does the school support or challenge to build and maintain the school, family, and community partnerships, particularly with immigrant parents?
8. What recommendations do you have for other teachers, including both in-service and pre-service teachers, in order to prepare themselves for a successful partnership with immigrant families?

Appendix C

Semi-structured Interview Questions for Community Members

Background information of community members

What is your relationship with the Vietnamese immigrant child?

How long have you known the Vietnamese immigrant child and his/ her family?

Interview questions

1. Do you think children should go to school before they are six years old?
2. How do you view school, family, and community partnerships in an early learning program?
3. How do you define the effective school, family, and community partnerships for the holistic development of immigrant children at early ages?
4. How did you first initiate the partnerships with the school and immigrant families in your community?
5. In what ways do you support an immigrant family who has a child attending an early learning program in your community?
6. In what ways do you get involved in an early learning program in your community?
7. Tell me what inspires or challenges you in establishing and maintaining the partnerships with teachers in an early learning program and with immigrant families.
8. What recommendations do you have for other community members in establishing and maintaining the partnerships with teachers in an early learning program and with immigrant families?

Appendix D

Recruitment Poster

Participants Needed for Research in School, Family, and Community Partnerships

We are looking for Vietnamese immigrant parents who have at least one child attending an early learning program (Preschool, Prekindergarten, and Kindergarten programs) in Saskatoon to voluntarily take part in a study of “Exploring the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in Saskatchewan: A multiple case study.”

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to participate in semi-structured interviews and observations.

Your participation would involve up to three short interviews over a two month period, each of which is approximately 45-60 minutes and up to four observations, each of which is approximately two hours.

We are also looking for teachers and community members, associated with participating families, to be involved in up to three short interviews over a two month period, each of which is approximately 45-60 minutes.

For more information about or to volunteer for this Ph.D. study, please contact: Nga Tu, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan.

This study has been reviewed by, and received approval through the Research Ethics

Office, University of Saskatchewan.

Appendix E

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Exploring the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in Saskatchewan: A multiple case study

Researcher:

Tu, Thi Quynh Nga, Doctoral Candidate

Department of Educational Administration, College of Education

University of Saskatchewan

Email: nga.tu@usask.ca

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Keith Walker

Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan

2. Dr. Beverley Brenna

Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan

Purposes of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to gather and describe the perceptions and practices of Vietnamese immigrant parents, teachers, and community members as three partners in sharing the interests and responsibilities for children's early learning and development. Further to this, the study will describe not just what they did, but how they perceived the school, family, and community partnerships for young children's early learning and development and felt about the experience of establishing and maintaining the partnerships. In addition, the study will explore the factors that challenge Vietnamese immigrant parents, teachers, and community members in initiating and maintaining partnerships.

Procedures:

Initial contact will be obtained through the researcher's participation in religious events of the Vietnamese community in Saskatoon. The researcher will provide information via a recruitment poster to potential participants. Consent forms will be distributed to the Vietnamese immigrant parents to confirm their voluntary participation. Teachers and community members are also selected based on their proximity with the child and the family. After recruitment information has been presented via the poster, letters of consent will be mailed. Each participant will have one copy of the signed consent letter to keep. All the consent letters will be returned to the researcher by February 28, 2014.

Once participation has been established, one visit will administered for participant interview. Each visit is of approximately 45-60 minutes in length. These visits will revolve around semi-structured interview questions where answers will be audio taped and transcribed.

In addition, approximately 20 visits (four visits either at home or in a public place per one Vietnamese immigrant family) will be administered for participant observation. Each visit is of approximately two hours in length.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study or your role.

Potential Risks: There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Potential Benefits:

The benefits for Vietnamese immigrant parents, teachers, and community members who participate in the study is that they will have the opportunity to reflect on their partnerships for the education and development of children, particularly Vietnamese immigrant children. Further to this, they will consider the impacts of their partnerships on children's early learning and

development as well as the challenges they may have in order to further improve their strategies of establishing and maintaining the partnerships. This study also contributes to the limited Canadian research literature of the school, family, and community partnerships. Potentially, policy makers and educators may benefit from close reflections on various partnerships in a Canadian context to develop policies and programs regarding partnerships for immigrant populations.

Storage of data:

The data, the research results and other materials connected with this study, will be safeguarded and securely stored in my research co-supervisor's office on a password protected computer at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of six years according to the University of Saskatchewan guidelines.

Confidentiality:

The data from this study may be presented at conferences and may be published as part of conference proceedings or in academic journals and book chapters; however, your identity will be kept confidential. Although we will report direct quotations from the interview, you will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information (the name of your institution, your position etc.) will be removed from our report.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I grant permission to be audio taped: Yes: ____ No: ____

I wish to remain anonymous, but you may refer to me by a pseudonym: Yes: ____ No: ____

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is voluntary and you may answer only those questions with which you are comfortable. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time up until two weeks after the member-checking has occurred regarding the transcripts of the audiotapes, without explanation or penalty of any sort.

Follow up:

To obtain results from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address *nga.tu@usask.ca*. A copy of the results will be offered upon the participant's request.

Questions or Concerns:

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have regarding to the procedures and goals of the study or your role in the study. The best way for you to contact me is at the e-mail address given above.

This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Board on February 5th 2014. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office *ethics.office@usask.ca* or (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Signed Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____ <i>Name of Participant</i>	_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Date</i>
_____ <i>Researcher's Signature</i>	_____ <i>Date</i>	

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix F

Transcript Release Form

Title: Exploring the school, family, and community partnerships of Vietnamese immigrant families in Saskatchewan: A multiple case study

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with [name of the researcher]. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to *Tu, Thi Quynh Nga* to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Appendix G

Interview Protocol

Time of interview:		Date:	
Place:			
Interviewer:			
Interviewee:		Position of interviewee:	
Briefly describe the research			
Questions		Answers	

Appendix H

Observational Protocol

Date:	Time in:	Time out:
Name of Observer:		
Setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home setting • Public place (church or library) • Others: _____ 		
Participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: • Gender: • Occupation: • Years of experience: • Others: _____ 		
Descriptions of Events (chronology)		
Descriptive notes	Reflective notes	

Adapted from *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*
 (3rd ed.) by J. W. Cresswell, (2013). Copyright by Sage Publication, Inc.

Appendix I

Recommended Practices related to Parenting

for Vietnamese Immigrant Parents with Young Children

Practices related to Parenting	English Instruction	Vietnamese Instruction (Hướng dẫn bằng Tiếng Việt)
<p>Food preparation</p> <p>Chuẩn bị thức ăn cho trẻ</p>	<p>- Inform the daycare teachers about different styles and types of food commonly served for Vietnamese immigrant children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Style of food: Vietnamese immigrant children tend to be served with more puree food such as different kinds of porridge. Or Vietnamese children tend to be fed with more freshly-cooked food whereas more processed and canned food is served for young children in the Canada daycare centres. • Type of food: Vietnamese immigrant children tend to eat 	<p>- Thông báo cho giáo viên về dạng thức ăn và loại thức ăn quen thuộc với trẻ em Việt Nam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dạng thức ăn: Trẻ em Việt Nam thường được bố mẹ cho ăn đồ ăn nhuyễn, ví dụ như các loại cháo gạo. Hoặc bố mẹ Việt Nam có xu hướng nấu đồ ăn tươi cho con thay vì cho con ăn các đồ ăn chế biến sẵn hoặc đóng hộp được sử dụng tương đối phổ biến ở các nhà trẻ Canada. • Loại thức ăn: Trẻ em Việt Nam có xu hướng ăn nhiều

	<p>more rice products than wheat products.</p> <p>- Introduce the child to some kinds of Western food before sending him to the daycare centre.</p> <p>(For examples: More mashed or finely chopped food should be introduced to the children from six to twelve months old. In addition, different kinds of cereal, raw vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, or snow peas, and crackers served with sliced cheese are frequently fed to the children in the Canada daycare centres.</p>	<p>sản phẩm từ gạo hơn các sản phẩm từ lúa mỳ.</p> <p>- Giới thiệu cho trẻ một số loại thực phẩm được chế biến theo phong cách phương Tây trước khi gửi trẻ đến nhà trẻ/trường mầm non.</p> <p>(Ví dụ: Bố mẹ có thể cho trẻ làm quen với thức ăn được cắt hoặc nghiền thành các mẫu nhỏ trong giai đoạn từ 6 đến 12 tháng tuổi. Hoặc bố mẹ tập cho trẻ ăn một số loại ngũ cốc, hoặc rau sống như hoa lơ xanh, cà rốt, hoặc đậu Hà Lan non, hoặc một số loại bánh quy mặn ăn kèm với phô mai được cắt lát nhỏ. Những loại thức ăn như trên được sử dụng phổ biến ở các nhà trẻ/ trường mầm non ở Canada.</p>
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<p>Clothing</p> <p>Chuẩn bị quần áo cho trẻ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explain to the daycare teachers the tropical weather condition in Vietnam. - Request the teacher to remind the child to wear more clothes than his/her classmates if necessary, especially in winter time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giải thích cho cô giáo sự khác biệt về điều kiện thời tiết giữa Canada và Việt Nam. Vì Việt Nam là nước có khí hậu nhiệt đới nên khả năng chịu lạnh của trẻ em Việt Nam có thể bị hạn chế hơn so với trẻ em Canada. Trước khi tập cho các bé thích nghi, bố mẹ có thể nhờ cô giáo nhắc nhở các bé mặc thêm áo ấm, nhất là vào mùa đông.
<p>Home conditions supporting children's early learning</p> <p>Chuẩn bị điều kiện học tập cho trẻ tại nhà</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Divide your child's learning space into different learning corners - Name each learning corner based on the learning area desired by the parents and the child (For examples: "Reading" corner, "Language" corner, "Mathematics" corner, and "Art and Craft" corner, ...etc) - Decorate every corner properly (For examples: "Mathematics" corner decorated with the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chia không gian học tập của trẻ thành các góc học tập theo các mục đích khác nhau - Đặt tên cho các góc học tập dựa theo lĩnh vực mà bố mẹ và trẻ yêu thích (Ví dụ: Góc Đọc sách, góc Ngôn ngữ, góc Toán học, góc Nghệ thuật và thủ công, ...vv.) - Trang trí các góc học tập một cách phù hợp.

	<p>timetables and some colourful numbers; “Language” corner decorated with short poems/songs or printed words; “Art and Craft” corner decorated with the child’s paintings and equipped with crayons, markers, pencils, and drawing papers,...etc)</p>	<p>(Ví dụ: Bố mẹ và trẻ có thể trang trí góc Toán học với bảng cửu chương hay những con số nhiều màu sắc; góc Ngôn ngữ với những bài thơ hoặc bài hát ngắn hoặc một số từ; góc Nghệ thuật và Thủ công được trang trí với tranh vẽ của trẻ hoặc bày trí với bút sáp, bút màu, bút chì, và giấy vẽ,...vv)</p>
	<p>- Stick word cards in both Vietnamese and English into the furniture, appliances, and other objects in each room. This may inspire the child to learn both languages and may be convenient for the parents to teach the child not only the languages but also the names of different objects in the house.</p> <p>(For example: Stick the word card “bàn học” printed/written in black colour and the word card</p>	<p>- Dán các thẻ chữ bằng tiếng Việt và tiếng Anh tương ứng với các đồ dùng và vật dụng trong mỗi phòng. Việc nhìn thấy chữ được gắn với các đồ vật trong nhà sẽ có thể tạo hứng thú cho trẻ học chữ. Việc dán chữ lên các đồ vật sẽ thuận tiện cho các bố mẹ vừa dạy ngôn ngữ cho trẻ vừa cho trẻ nhận biết tên các đồ vật trong gia đình.</p> <p>(Ví dụ: Bố mẹ dán thẻ chữ “bàn học” được viết/ in bằng mực đen</p>

	<p>“desk” printed/written in red colour to the child’s desk. Or parents may ask the child to stick the word card by himself/herself.) (Please see Photo 1 in Appendix J)</p>	<p>và thẻ chữ “desk” được in bằng mực đỏ lên bàn học của trẻ. Bố mẹ có thể nhờ trẻ dán hộ, chắc chắn trẻ sẽ rất thích thú với công việc này.) (Xem ảnh số 1 ở Phụ lục J)</p>
<p>Help the teacher understand Vietnamese culture</p> <p>Giúp giáo viên hiểu thêm về văn hóa Việt nam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively inform the teacher about how differently Vietnamese people celebrate some special days such as Valentine’s Day, Christmas Day, and Solar New Year Festival - Actively inform the teacher about some typical Vietnamese cultural traditions and customs, particularly of the Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival - Share with the teacher information about what the parents and the child do to celebrate some special holidays, especially the Vietnamese Lunar New Year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chủ động chia sẻ với giáo viên về sự khác nhau trong cách thức kỷ niệm một số ngày lễ đặc biệt như ngày lễ Tình yêu, lễ Giáng sinh, và Tết Dương lịch - Chủ động chia sẻ với giáo viên về một số phong tục và truyền thống văn hóa điển hình của đất nước Việt Nam, cụ thể là trong dịp Tết Nguyên Đán. - Chia sẻ với giáo viên một số hoạt động mà bố mẹ và trẻ sẽ tiến hành để chào đón một số ngày lễ, đặc biệt là Tết Nguyên Đán

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively request the teacher to arrange time for a short presentation/ video clip to introduce about the Vietnamese Lunar New Year to all the children in the class - Prepare some ingredients to make “Chung cake” (a typical kind of food served in Vietnamese Lunar New Year) and demonstrate how to make the cake in the child’s classroom (Please see Photo 2 and 3 on Appendix J) - Draw some pictures of “hoa đào/cherry flower” (typical flower of the Lunar New Year in the Northern Vietnam) or “hoa mai/ ochna integerrima” (typical flower of the Lunar New Year in the Southern Vietnam) with the child and present to the teacher (Please see Photo 4 on Appendix J). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chủ động đề nghị với giáo viên bố trí thời gian cho bố mẹ đến thuyết trình ngắn gọn hoặc trình chiếu một đoạn phim về Tết Nguyên Đán cho các trẻ trong lớp học của con - Chuẩn bị các nguyên liệu làm bánh Chung (một loại bánh đặc trưng cho Tết Nguyên Đán) và biểu diễn cách gói bánh cho con và các bạn cùng xem (Xem ảnh số 2 và số 3 ở Phụ lục J) - Cùng con vẽ tranh hoa đào và hoa mai đem tặng cô giáo để trang trí lớp học nhân dịp Tết Nguyên Đán của Việt Nam và Tết Âm lịch của một số nước Châu Á khác (Xem ảnh số 4 ở Phụ lục J)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow the child to wear “Áo dài” (a kind of long dress is symbolized as a traditional costume of Vietnamese women) on some special occasions (Please see Photo 5 on Appendix J) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cho trẻ mặc áo dài để giới thiệu trang phục truyền thống của Việt Nam thường được sử dụng trong những dịp lễ hội (Xem ảnh số 5 ở Phụ lục J)
<p>Other parenting practices</p> <p>Một số hướng dẫn khác</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update the teacher information about the child openly and honestly as his/her private information is legally protected in Canada. - Request for the teacher’s advice and experience in training the child to be independent and equipping the child with life skills in the home setting (For example: how to teach the child to dress up by himself/herself and some other self-serving skills) - Sharing with the teacher about the parents’ expectations for the child’s academic early learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thông báo cho giáo viên một cách cởi mở và trung thực về tình hình của trẻ vì những thông tin riêng tư của trẻ được bảo vệ một cách hợp pháp ở Canada - Tham khảo ý kiến và kinh nghiệm của giáo viên về cách rèn cho trẻ tính độc lập và một số kỹ năng sống trong môi trường gia đình (Ví dụ: cách dạy trẻ tự mặc quần áo hoặc một số kỹ năng tự phục vụ khác) - Chia sẻ với giáo viên về những mong muốn của bố mẹ trong việc cho trẻ làm quen với một số môn học như số học, học đọc,

	and update what the parents are teaching the child at home	học viết. Đồng thời, bố mẹ cũng có thể chia sẻ với giáo viên nội dung môn học trẻ đang được dạy ở nhà để giáo viên có thể phối hợp dạy cho trẻ ở trên lớp.
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Appendix J

Photos Illustrating Practices Relating to Parenting

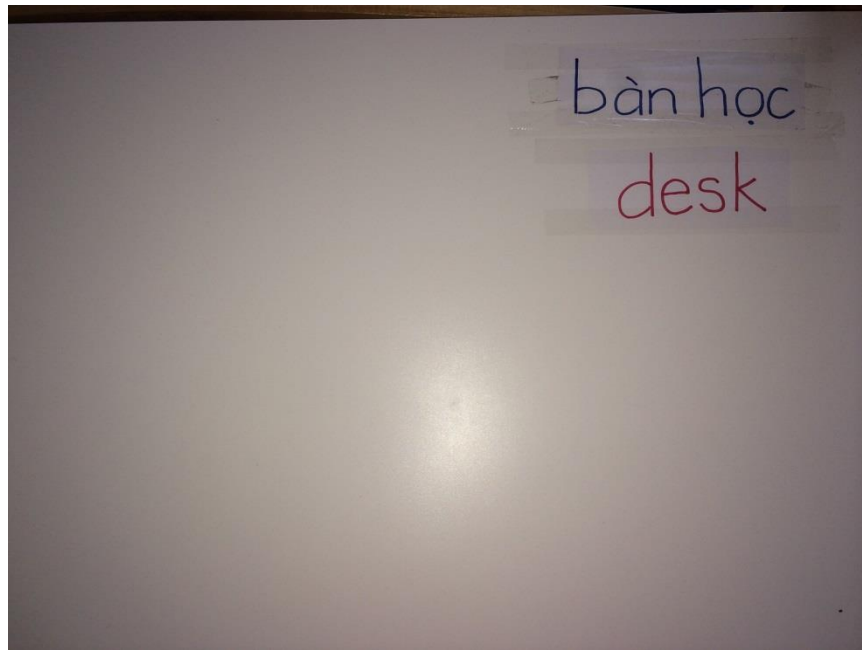


Photo 1: Word Card glued on the Child's Desk



Photo 2: Ingredients to Make “Chung” Cake



Photo 3: Demonstration of Making Chung Cake in a Canadian Daycare Centre



Photo 4: Cherry Flower



Photo 5: A Vietnamese Immigrant Child in “Ao dai” Costume